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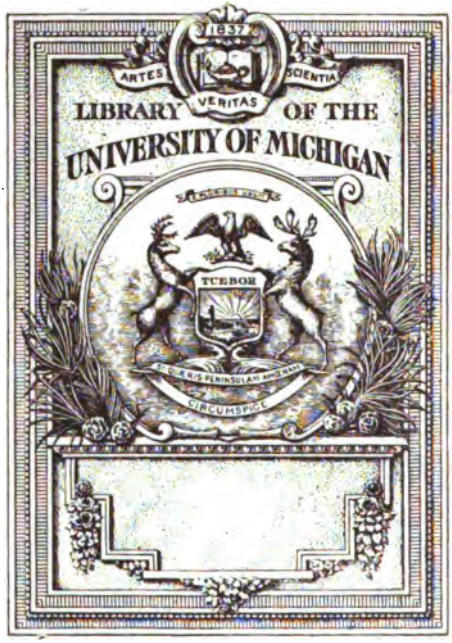

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TRAITS AND STORIES OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. III

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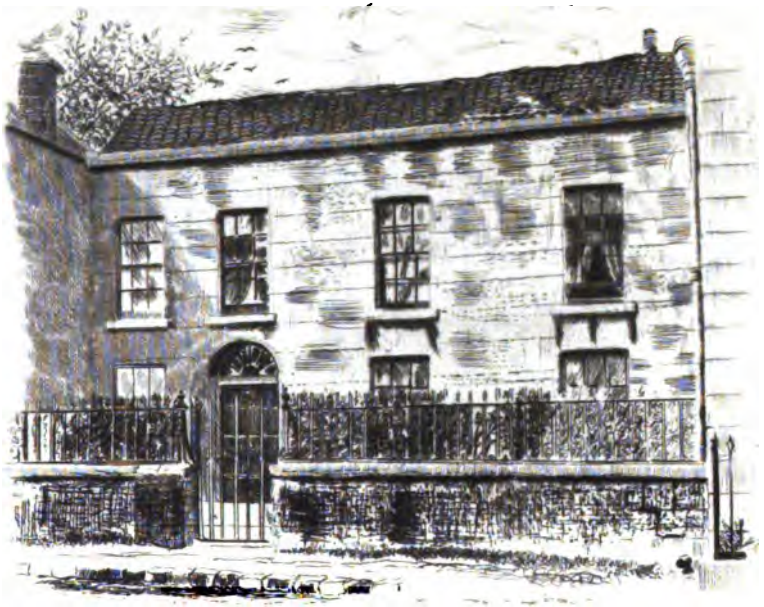

House at Sandford, Dublin, in which Carleton died.

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TRAITS AND STORIES OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY

BY

WILLIAM CARLETON

EDITED BY

D. J. O'DONOGHUE

LONDON
J. M. DENT AND CO.
NEW YORK: MACMILLAN AND CO.
MDCCCXCVI

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Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.
at the Ballantyne Press

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(*Etched by H. Cricknore.*)

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(*By Phiz.*)

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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND SERIES

WITH respect to the contents of this Second Series, the Author has only to observe that the volumes containing the First Series had an excellent sale, considering that they were of Irish manufacture. They are now getting into a third edition; and much of their success may probably be ascribed to the fact of their never having been puffed; for no man excites more notice than he who runs counter to the fashion.

It was therefore the brisk sale of the First Series, joined to a vacancy in the Author's purse, which he felt rather anxious to have filled up, that induced him to bring out the present work. He hopes it may succeed as well as the others; but that it may succeed better is a wish due to the worthy and liberal publisher who brings it out.

The Author was pressed by many of his friends to dedicate this book to some great man; but as he had only a month's notice to look about him, he found himself rather at a loss for time to discover any one worthy of that character—except the Castle porter.[1] The public is the only great man at present whose patronage is worth anything to a writer.

To the Reviewers, Periodicals, and the Press in general, the Author begs to return his warmest and most grateful acknowledgments for their favourable notices of his first effort. It was impossible to bestow greater praise on any book of the kind than it received at their hands, yet he hopes they will praise this still more highly. God be with the present times! They are not like those in which an Author was almost compelled to dedicate his book to some Lord, whose name accompanied it as a kind of safe conduct to oblivion. The world, however, is a huge paradox. One would think, for instance, that works of fiction

[1] That imposing functionary at Dublin Castle.—ED.

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should have flourished in the dedicating age, yet such was not the fact. Fiction was wasted on the patron to such excess in the beginning of the book that the Author had little left for the work itself. It is the avoiding of this error that has raised imaginative writing to such perfection in the present day.

This Preface, like every other human work, except the improvement of Ireland, must come to a close. It was written on compulsion; it was to have been serious; it was to have given a touching dissertation upon Irish character; it was to have been elaborate, philosophical, and what not—all within the compass of four pages! In vain has the Author tried condensation—in vain also has he attempted epigrammatic pathos, in order to save space. The epigrams were sorrowful enough, he admits; but as the pity they were calculated to excite was more likely to be bestowed on himself than on his country, he thought it more patriotic to decline being felt for in that light so long as his country was a greater object of compassion than himself.

The Author ought perhaps to mention here that when this work was nearly ready for publication, a calamitous fire reduced the printer's establishment to ashes. The "Traits and Stories" unhappily shared the same fate; the first edition went off brilliantly in the course of one night. Had the book appeared as it was then printed, it would have rivalled anything coming from the first houses of London. It was again put through the press in a hurry, and under circumstances highly disadvantageous, and yet its typographical execution is certainly creditable to the country.

In adverting to this subject it may be prudent to state that the last scene between Denis O'Shaughnessy and Susan is not now such as it was originally. The first contained pathos to deluge a whole boarding-school; but alas! the first pathos was burned in the conflagration, and unhappily the Author is not in the habit of being twice pathetic on the same subject.

Reader! farewell for a while. A long preface is like a long grace: if the dinner be good, it is doubly tedious; and if it be bad, it adds to our disappointment by sharpening the appetite for what is not to be had. Now fall to, and may you relish what is before you.

W. CARLETON.

DUBLIN, 1833.

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TRAITS AND STORIES OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY

THE DONAGH

OR, THE HORSE STEALERS

CARNMORE, one of those small villages that are to be found in the outskirts of many parishes in Ireland, whose distinct boundaries are lost in the contiguous mountain-wastes, was situated at the foot of a deep gorge, or pass, overhung by two bleak hills, from the naked sides of which the storm swept over it without discomposing the peaceful little nook of cabins that stood below. About a furlong farther down were two or three farm-houses, inhabited by a family named Cassidy, men of simple, inoffensive manners, and considerable wealth. They were, however, acute and wise in their generation; intelligent cattle-dealers, on whom it would have been a matter of some difficulty to impose an unsound horse, or a cow older than was intimated by her horn-rings, even when conscientiously dressed up for sale by the ingenious aid of the file or burning-iron. Between their houses and the hamlet rose a conical pile of rocks, loosely heaped together, from which the place took its name of Carnmore.

About three years before the time of this story there came two men with their families to reside in the upper village, and the house which they chose as a residence was one at some distance from those which composed the little group we have just been describing. They said their name was Meehan, although the general report went that this was not

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true; that the name was an assumed one, and that some dark mystery, which none could penetrate, shrouded their history and character. They were certainly remarkable men. The elder, named Anthony, was a dark, black-browed person, stern in his manner, and atrociously cruel in his disposition. His form was herculean, his bones strong and hard as iron, and his sinews stood out in undeniable evidence of a life hitherto spent in severe toil and exertion, to bear which he appeared to an amazing degree capable. His brother Denis was a small man, less savage and daring in his character, and consequently more vacillating and cautious than Anthony; for the points in which he resembled him were superinduced upon his natural disposition by the close connection that subsisted between them, and by the identity of their former pursuits in life, which, beyond doubt, had been such as could not bear investigation.

The old proverb of "birds of a feather flock together" is certainly a true one, and in this case it was once more verified. Before the arrival of these men in the village there had been five or six bad characters in the neighbourhood, whose delinquencies were pretty well known. With these persons the strangers, by that sympathy which assimilates with congenial good or evil, soon became acquainted; and although their intimacy was as secret and cautious as possible, still it had been observed, and was known; for they had frequently been seen skulking together at daybreak or in the dusk of evening.

It is unnecessary to say that Meehan and his brother did not mingle much in the society of Carnmore. In fact, the villagers and they mutually avoided each other. A mere return of the common phrases of salutation was generally the most that passed between them: they never entered into that familiarity which leads to mutual intercourse, and justifies one neighbour in freely entering the cabin of another, to spend a winter's night or a summer's evening in amusing conversation. Few had ever been in the house of the Meehans since it became theirs. Nor were the means of their subsistence known. They led an idle life, had no scarcity of food, were decently clothed, and never wanted money—circumstances which occasioned no small degree of conjecture in Carnmore and its vicinity.

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Some said they lived by theft; others, that they were coiners; and there were many who imagined, from the diabolical countenance of the elder brother, that he had sold himself to the devil, who, they affirmed, set his mark upon him, and was his paymaster. Upon this hypothesis several were ready to prove that he had neither breath nor shadow: they had seen him, they said, standing under a hedge-row of elder—that unholy tree which furnished wood for the cross, and on which Judas hanged himself—yet, although it was noonday in the month of July, his person threw out no shadow. Worthy souls! because the man stood in the shade at the time. But with these simple explanations Superstition had nothing to do, although we are bound, in justice to the reverend old lady, to affirm that she was kept exceedingly busy in Carnmore. If a man had a sick cow, she was elf-shot; if his child became consumptive, it had been overlooked, or received a blast from the fairies; if the hooping-cough was rife, all the afflicted children were put three times under an ass; or when they happened to have the "mumps," were led before sunrise to a south-running stream, with a halter hanging about their necks, under an obligation of silence during the ceremony. In short, there could not possibly be a more superstitious spot than that which these men of mystery had selected for their residence. Another circumstance which caused the people to look upon them with additional dread was their neglect of mass on Sundays and holidays, though they avowed themselves Roman Catholics. They did not, it is true, join in the dances, drinking-matches, football, and other sports with which the Carnmore folk celebrated the Lord's Day; but they scrupled not, on the other hand, to mend their garden-ditch or mould a row of cabbages on the Sabbath—a circumstance for which two or three of the Carnmore boys were, one Sunday evening when tipsy, well-nigh chastising them. Their usual manner, however, of spending that day was by sauntering lazily about the fields, or stretching themselves supinely on the sunny side of the hedges, their arms folded into their bosoms, and their hats lying over their faces to keep off the sun.

In the meantime, loss of property was becoming quite

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common in the neighbourhood. Sheep were stolen from the farmers, and cows and horses from the more extensive graziers in the parish. The complaints against the authors of these depredations were loud and incessant. Watches were set, combinations for mutual security formed, and subscriptions to a considerable amount entered into, with a hope of being able, by the temptation of a large reward, to work upon the weakness or cupidity of some accomplice to betray the gang of villains who infested the neighbourhood. All, however, was in vain: every week brought some new act of plunder to light, perpetrated upon such unsuspecting persons as had hitherto escaped the notice of the robbers; but no trace could be discovered of the perpetrators. Although theft had from time to time been committed upon a small scale before the arrival of the Meehans in the village, yet it was undeniable that since that period the instances not only multiplied, but became of a more daring and extensive description. They arose in a gradual scale from the hen-roost to the stable; and with such ability were they planned and executed, that the people, who in every instance identified Meehan and his brother with them, began to believe and hint that, in consequence of their compact with the devil, they had power to render themselves invisible. Common fame, who can best treat such subjects, took up this, and never laid it aside until, by narrating several exploits which Meehan the elder was said to have performed in other parts of the kingdom, she wound it up by roundly informing the Carnmorians that having been once taken prisoner for murder, he was caught by the leg when half through a hedge, but that being most wickedly determined to save his neck, he left the leg with the officer who took him, shouting out that it was a new species of leg-bail; and yet he moved away with surprising speed upon two of as good legs as any man in his Majesty's dominions might wish to walk off upon from the insinuating advances of a bailiff or a constable!

The family of the Meehans consisted of their wives, and three children, two boys and a girl—the former were the offspring of the younger brother, and the latter of Anthony. It has been observed, with truth and justice, that there is no man, how hardened and diabolical soever in his natural

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temper, who does not exhibit to some particular object a peculiar species of affection. Such a man was Anthony Meehan. That sullen hatred which he bore to human society, and that inherent depravity of heart which left the trail of vice and crime upon his footsteps, were flung off his character when he addressed his daughter Anne. To him her voice was like music. To her he was not the reckless villain, treacherous and cruel, which the helpless and unsuspecting found him, but a parent kind and indulgent as ever pressed an only and beloved daughter to his bosom. Anne was handsome: had she been born and educated in an elevated rank in society, she would have been softened by the polish and luxury of life into perfect beauty; she was, however, utterly without education. As Anne experienced from her father no unnatural cruelty, no harshness, nor even indifference, she consequently loved him in return; for she knew that tenderness from such a man was a proof of parental love rarely to be found in life. Perhaps she loved not her father the less on perceiving that he was proscribed by the world—a circumstance which might also have enhanced in his eyes the affection she bore him. When Meehan came to Carnmore she was sixteen; and as that was three years before the incident occurred on which we have founded this narrative, the reader may now suppose her to be about nineteen; an interesting country girl as to person, but with a mind completely neglected, yet remarkable for an uncommon stock of good-nature and credulity.

About the hour of eleven o'clock one winter's night in the beginning of December, Meehan and his brother sat moodily at their hearth. The fire was of peat which had recently been put down, and from between the turf the ruddy blaze was shooting out in those little tongues and gusts of sober light which throw around the rural hearth one of those charms which make up the felicity of domestic life. The night was stormy, and the wind moaned and howled along the dark hills beneath which the cottage stood. Every object in the house was shrouded in a mellow shade, which afforded to the eye no clear outline, except around the hearth alone, where the light brightened into a golden hue, giving the idea of calmness and peace. Anthony Meehan sat on

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one side of it, and his daughter opposite him, knitting. Before the fire sat Denis, drawing shapes in the ashes for his own amusement.

"Bless me," said he, "how sthrange it is!"

"What is?" inquired Anthony, in his deep and grating tones.

"Why, thin, it is sthrange!" continued the other, who, despite of the severity of his brother, was remarkably superstitious—"a coffin I made in the ashes three times runnin'! Isn't it very quare, Anne?" he added, addressing the niece.

"Sthrange enough, of a sartinty," she replied, being unwilling to express before her father the alarm which the incident, slight as it was, created in her mind; for she, like the uncle, was subject to such ridiculous influences. "How did it happen, uncle?"

"Why, thin, no way in life, Anne; only, as I was thryin' to make a shoe, it turned out a coffin on my hands. I thin smoothed the ashes, and began agin, an' sorra bit of it but was a coffin still. Well, says I, I'll give you another chance—here goes once more; an', as sure as a gun's iron, it was a coffin the third time! Heaven be about us, it's odd enough!"

"It would be little matther you were nailed down in a coffin," replied Anthony fiercely; "the world would have little loss. What a pitiful, cowardly rascal you are—afraid o' your own shadow afther the sun goes down, except I'm at your elbow! Can't you dhrive all them palavers out o' your head? Didn't the sargint tell us, an' prove to us, the time we broke the guard-house, an' took Frinch lave o' the ridgment for good, that the whole o' that, an' more along wid it, is all priestcraft?"

"I remimber he did, sure enough. I dunna where the same sargint is now, Tony? About no good, anyway, I'll be bail. Howsomever, in regard o' that, why doesn't yourself give up fastin' from the mate of a Friday?"

"Do you want me to sthretch you on the hearth?" replied the savage, whilst his eyes kindled into fury, and his grim visage darkened into a Satanic expression. "I'll tache you to be puttin' me through my catechiz about atin' mate. I may manage that as I plase; it comes at first cost, anyhow;

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but no cross-questions to me about it, if you regard your health!"

"I must say for you," replied Denis reproachfully, "that you're a good warrant to put the health astray upon us of an odd start: we're not come to this time o' day widout carryin' somethin' to remimber you by. For my own part, Tony, I don't like such tokens; an' moreover, I wish you had resaved a thrifle o' larnin', espishily in the writin' line; for whenever we have any difference you're so ready to prove your opinion by settin' your mark upon me, that I'd rather, fifty times over, you could write it with pen an' ink."

"My father will give that up, uncle," said the niece. "It's bad for anybody to be fightin', but worst of all for brothers, that ought to live in peace and kindness. Won't you, father?"

"Maybe I will, dear, some o' these days, on your account, Anne; but you must get this creature of an uncle of yours to let me alone, an' not be aggravatin' me with his folly. As for your mother, she's worse; her tongue's sharp enough to skin a flint, and a batin' a day has little effect on her."

Anne sighed, for she knew how low an irreligious life, and the infamous society with which, as her father's wife, her mother was compelled to mingle, had degraded her.

"Well, but, father, you don't set her a good example yourself," said Anne; "and if she scoulds and drinks now, you know she was a different woman when you got her. You allow this yourself; and the crathur, the dhrunkest time she is, doesn't she cry bittherly, remimberin' what she has been. Instead of one batin' a day, father, thry no batin' a day, an' maybe it'll turn out betther than thumpin' an' smashin' her, as you do."

"Why, thin, there's thruth an' sinse in what the girl says, Tony," observed Denis.

"Come," replied Anthony, "whatever she may say, I'll suffer none of your interference. Go an' get us the black bottle from the place; it'll soon be time to move. I hope they won't stay too long."

Denis obeyed this command with great readiness, for whisky in some degree blunted the fierce passions of his brother, and deadened his cruelty, or, rather, diverted it

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from minor objects to those which occurred in the lawless perpetration of his villainy.

The bottle was got; and in the meantime the fire blazed up brightly. The storm without, however, did not abate, nor did Meehan and his brother wish that it should. As the elder of them took the glass from the hands of the other, an air of savage pleasure blazed in his eyes, on reflecting that the tempest of the night was favourable to the execution of the villainous deed on which they were bent.

"More power to you!" said Anthony, impiously personifying the storm. "Sure, that's one proof that God doesn't throuble His head about what we do, or we would not get such a murtherin' fine night as is in it, anyhow. That's it! blow an' tundher away, an' keep yourself an' us as black as hell, sooner than we should fail in what we intind! Anne, your health, *acushla!*—Yours, Dinny! If you keep your tongue off o' me, I'll neither make nor meddle in regard o' the batin' o' you."

"I hope you'll stick to that, anyhow," replied Denis. "For my part, I'm sick and sore o' you every day in the year. Many another man would put salt wather between himself and yourself, sooner nor become a batin'-stone for you, as I have been. Few would bear it when they could mend themselves."

"What's that you say?" replied Anthony, suddenly laying down his glass, catching his brother by the collar, and looking him, with a murderous scowl, in the face. "Is it thrachery you hint at?—eh? sarpent, is it thrachery you mane?" and as he spoke he compressed Denis's neck between his powerful hands until the other was black in the face.

Anne flew to her uncle's assistance, and with much difficulty succeeded in rescuing him from the deadly gripe of her father, who exclaimed, as he loosed his hold, "You may thank the girl, or you'd not spake, nor dare to spake, about crossin' the salt wather or lavin' me in a desateful way agin. If I ever suspect that a thought of thrachery comes into your heart, I'll do for you; and you may carry your story to the world I'll send you to."

"Father, dear, why are you so suspicious of my uncle?"

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said Anne. "Sure, he's a long time livin' with you, an' goin' step for step in all the danger you meet with. If he had a mind to turn out a Judas agin you, he might a done it long agone; not to mintion the throuble it would bring on his own head, seein' he's as deep in everything as you are."

"If that's all that's throubling you," replied Denis, trembling, "you may make yourself asy on the head of it. But well I know 'tisn't that that's on your mind; 'tis your own conscience; but, sure, it's not fair nor rasonable for you to vent your evil thoughts on me!"

"Well, he won't," said Anne; "he'll quit it; his mind's throubled, an', dear knows, it's no wondher it should. Och, I'd give the world wide that his conscience was lightened of the load that's upon it! My mother's lameness is nothin'; but the child, poor thing! An' it was only widin three days of her lyin'-in. Och, it was a cruel sthroke, father! An' when I seen its little innocent face, dead, an' me widout a brother, I thought my heart would break, thinkin' upon who did it!" The tears fell in showers from her eyes, as she added, "Father, I don't want to vex you, but I wish you to feel sorry for that at laste. Oh, if you'd bring the priest, an' give up sich coorses, father dear, how happy we'd be, an' how happy yourself ud be!"

Conscience for a moment started from her sleep, and uttered a cry of guilt in his spirit; his face became ghastly, and his eyes full of horror; his lips quivered; and he was about to upbraid his daughter with more harshness than usual, when a low whistle, resembling that of a curlew, was heard at a chink of the door. In a moment he gulped down another glass of spirits, and was on his feet: "Go, Denis, an' get the arms," said he, "while I let them in."

On opening the door, three men entered, having their greatcoats muffled about them, and their hats slouched. One of them, named Kenny, was a short villain, but of a thick-set, hairy frame. The other was known as "the Big Mower," in consequence of his following that employment every season, and of his great skill in performing it. He had a deep-rooted objection against permitting the palm of his hand to be seen; a reluctance which common fame attributed to the fact of his having received on that part

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the impress of a hot iron, in the shape of the letter T, not forgetting to add that T was the hieroglyphic for Thief. The villain himself affirmed it was simply the mark of a cross, burned into it by a blessed friar, as a charm against St. Vitus's dance, to which he had been subject. The people, however, were rather sceptical, not of the friar's power to cure that malady, but of the fact of his ever having moved a limb under it; and they concluded with telling him, good-humouredly enough, that, notwithstanding the charm, he was destined to die "wid the threble of it in his toe." The third was a noted pedlar called Martin, who, under pretence of selling tape, pins, scissors, &c., was very useful in "setting" such premises as this virtuous fraternity might, without much risk, make a descent upon.

"I thought yees would out-stay your time," said the elder Meehan, relapsing into his determined hardihood of character; "we're ready, hours agone. Dick Rice gave me two curlew an' two patrich[1] calls to-day. Now pass the glass among yees while Denny brings the arms. I know there's danger in this business, in regard of the Cassidys livin' so near us. If I see anybody afut, I'll use the curlew call; an' if not, I'll whistle twice on the patrich one, an' yees may come an. The horse is worth aighty guineas if he's worth a shillin'; an' we'll make sixty of him ourselves."

For some time they chatted about the plan in contemplation, and drank freely of the spirits, until at length the impatience of the elder Meehan at the delay of his brother became ungovernable. His voice deepened into tones of savage passion as he uttered a series of blasphemous curses against this unfortunate butt of his indignation and malignity. At length he rushed out furiously to know why he did not return; but on reaching a secret excavation in the mound against which the house was built, he found, to his utter dismay, that Denis had made his escape by an artificial passage scooped out of it to secure themselves a retreat in case of surprise or detection. It opened behind the house among a clump of blackthorn and brushwood, and was covered with green turf in such a manner as to escape

[1] Partridge.

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the notice of all who were not acquainted with the secret. Meehan's face, on his return, was worked up into an expression truly awful.

"We're sould!" said he; "but stop, I'll tache the thraithur what revinge is!"

In a moment he awoke his brother's two sons, and dragged them by the neck, one in each hand, to the hearth.

"Your villain of a father's off," said he, "to betray us. Go an' folly him—bring him back, an' he'll be safe from me; but let him become a stag agin us, an' if I should hunt you both into the bowels of the airth, I'll send yees to a short account. I don't care that," and he snapped his fingers—"ha, ha!—no, I don't care that for the law; I know how to dale with it when it comes! An' what's the stuff about the other world but priestcraft and lies!"

"Maybe," said the Big Mower, "Denis is gone to get the foreway of us, an' to take the horse himself. Our best plan is to lose no time, at all events; so let us hurry, for fraid the night might happen to clear up."

"He!" said Meehan, "he go alone! No; the miserable wretch is afeard of his own shadow. I only wondher he stuck to me so long; but, sure, he wouldn't, only I bate the courage in, and the fear out of him. You're right, Brian," said he, upon reflection; "let us lose no time, but be off. Do yees mind?" he added to his nephews; "did yees hear me? If you see him, let him come back, an' all will be berrid; but if he doesn't, you know your fate;" saying which, he and his accomplices departed amid the howling of the storm.

The next morning Carnmore, and indeed the whole parish, was in an uproar; a horse, worth eighty guineas, had been stolen in the most daring manner from the Cassidys, and the hue-and-cry was up after the thief or thieves who took him. For several days the search was closely maintained, but without success: not the slightest trace could be found of him or them. The Cassidys could very well bear to lose him; but there were many struggling farmers, on whose property serious depredations had been committed, who could not sustain their loss so easily. It was natural, under these circumstances, that suspicion should attach to many persons, some of whom had but indifferent characters before, as well as to several who

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certainly had never deserved suspicion. When a fortnight or so had elapsed, and no circumstances transpired that might lead to discovery, the neighbours, including those who had principally suffered by the robberies, determined to assemble upon a certain day at Cassidy's house, for the purpose of clearing themselves, on oath, of the imputations thrown out against some of them as accomplices in the thefts. In order, however, that the ceremony should be performed as solemnly as possible, they determined to send for Father Farrell and Mr. Nicholson, a magistrate, both of whom they requested to undertake the task of jointly presiding upon this occasion; and that the circumstance should have every publicity, it was announced from the altar by the priest on the preceding Sabbath, and published on the church-gate in large legible characters, ingeniously printed with a pen by the village schoolmaster.

In fact, the intended meeting and the object of it were already notorious; and much conversation was held upon its probable result, and the measures which might be taken against those who should refuse to swear. Of the latter description there was but one opinion, which was that their refusal in such a case would be tantamount to guilt. The innocent were anxious to vindicate themselves from suspicion; and as the suspected did not amount to more than a dozen, of course the whole body of the people, including the thieves themselves, who applauded it as loudly as the others, all expressed their satisfaction at the measures about to be adopted. A day was therefore appointed on which the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, particularly the suspected persons, should come to assemble at Cassidy's house, in order to have the characters of the innocent cleared up, and the guilty made known.

On the evening before this took place were assembled in Meehan's cottage the elder Meehan and the rest of the gang, including Denis, who had absconded on the night of the theft.

"Well, well, Denny," said Anthony who forced his rugged, nature into an appearance of better temper, that he might strengthen the timid spirit of his brother against the scrutiny about to take place on the morrow—perhaps, too, he dreaded

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him—"Well, well, Denny," I thought, sure enough, that it was some new piece of cowardice came over you. Just think of him," he added, "shabbin' off, only because he made, with a bit of a rod, three strokes in the ashes that he thought resembled a coffin!—ha, ha, ha!"

This produced a peal of derision at Denis's pusillanimous terror.

"Ay!" said the Big Mower, "he was makin' a coffin, was he? I wondher it wasn't a rope you drew, Denny. If any here dies in the coil, it will be the greatest coward, an' that's yourself."

"You may all laugh," replied Denis, "but I know such things to have a manin'. When my mother died, didn't my father—the heavens be his bed—see a black coach about a week before it? an' sure, from the first day she tuck ill, the dead-watch was heard in the house every night. And what was more nor that, she kept warm until she went into her grave;[1] an' accordingly didn't my sisther Shibby die within a year afther?"

"It's no matther about thim things," replied Anthony; "it's thruth about the dead-watch, my mother keepin' warm, an' Shibby's death, anyway. But on the night we tuck Cassidy's horse I thought you were goin' to betray us; I was surely in a murdherin' passion, an' would have done harm, only things turned out as they did."

"Why," said Denis, "the thruth is, I was afeard some of us would be shot, an' that the lot would fall on myself; for the coffin, thinks I, was sent as a warnin'. How-and-ever, I spied about Cassidy's stable till I seen that the coast was clear; so whin I heard the low cry of the patrich that Anthony and I agreed on, I joined yees."

"Well, about to-morrow," observed Kenny—"ha, ha, ha!—there'll be lots o' swearin'. Why, the whole parish is to switch the primer; many a thumb and coat-cuff will be kissed in spite of priest or magistrate. I remimber once, whin I was swearin' an *alibi* for long Paddy Murray, that suffered for the M'Gees, I kissed my thumb, I thought, so smoothly that

[1] It is supposed in Ireland, when a corpse retains, for a longer space of time than usual, anything like animal heat, that some person belonging to the family of the deceased will die within a year.

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no one would notish it; but I had a keen one to dale with, so says he, 'You know, for the matther o' that, my good fellow, that you have your thumb to kiss every day in the week,' says he; 'but you might salute the book out o' dacency and good manners — not,' says he, 'that you an' it are strangers aither; for, if I don't mistake, you're an ould hand at swearin' *alibis*.' At all evints, I had to smack the book itself, and it's I and Barney Green and Tim Casserly that did swear stiffly for Paddy; but the thing was too clear agin him; so he suffered, poor fellow, an' died right game, for he said over his dhrop—ha, ha, ha!—that he was as innocent o' the murdher as a child unborn; an' so he was in one sinse, bein' afther gettin' absolution."

"As to thumb-kissin'," observed the elder Meehan, "let there be none of it among us to-morrow; if we're caught at it, 'twould be as bad as stayin' away altogether. For my part, I'll give it a smack like a pistol-shot—ha, ha, ha!"

"I hope they won't bring the priest's book," said Denis. "I haven't the laste objection agin payin' my respects to the magistrate's paper, but somehow I don't like tastin' the priest's in a falsity."

"Don't you know," said the Big Mower, "that whin a magistrate's present it's ever an' always only the Tistament by law that's used. I myself wouldn't kiss the mass-book in a falsity."

"There's none of us sayin' we'd do it in a lie," said the elder Meehan; "an' it's well for thousands that the law doesn't use the priest's book; though, afther all, aren't there books that say religion's all a sham? I think myself it is; for if what they talk about justice an' Providence is thrue, would Tom Dillon be transported for the robbery we committed at Bantry? Tom, it's true, was an ould offender; but he was innocent of that, anyway. The world's all chance, boys, as Sargint Eustace used to say, and whin we die there's no more about us; so that I don't see why a man mightn't as well switch the priest's book as any other, only that somehow a body can't shake the terror of it off o' them."

"I dunna, Anthony, but you an' I ought to curse that sargint; only for him we mightn't be as we are, sore in our

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conscience, an' afeard of every fut we hear passin'," observed Denis.

"Spake for your own cowardly heart, man alive," replied Anthony; "for my part, I'm afeard o' nothin'. Put round the glass, and don't be nursin' it there all night. Sure, we're not so bad as the rot among the sheep, nor the black leg among the bullocks, nor the staggers among the horses, anyhow; an' yet they'd hang us up only for bein' fond of a bit o' mate—ha, ha, ha!"

"Thrue enough," said the Big Mower, philosophising. "God made the beef and the mutton, and the grass to feed it; but it was man made the ditches. Now we're only bringin' things back to the right way that Providence made them in, when ould times were in it, manin' before ditches war invinted—ha, ha, ha!"

"'Tis a good argument," observed Kenny, "only that judge and jury would be a little delicate in actin' up to it; an' the more's the pity. Howsomever, as Providence made the mutton, sure it's no harm for us to take what He sends."

"Ay; but," said Denis—

> "'God made man, an' man made money;
> God made bees, an' bees made honey;
> God made Satan, an' Satan made sin;
> An' God made a hell to put Satan in.'

Let nobody say there's not a hell; isn't it there plain from Scripthur?"

"I wish you had Scripthur tied about your neck!" replied Anthony. "How fond of it one o' the greatest thieves that ever missed the rope is! Why, the fellow could plan a roguery with any man that ever danced the hangman's hornpipe, an' yit he be's repatin' bits an' scraps of ould prayers, an' charms, an' stuff. Ay, indeed! Sure, he has a varse out o' the Bible that he thinks can prevint a man from bein' hung up any day!"

While Denny, the Big Mower, and the two Meehans were thus engaged in giving expression to their peculiar opinions, the pedlar held a conversation of a different kind with Anne.

With the secrets of the family in his keeping, he com-

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menced a rather penitent review of his own life, and expressed his intention of abandoning so dangerous a mode of accumulating wealth. He said he thanked Heaven that he had already laid up sufficient for the wants of a reasonable man; that he understood farming and the management of sheep particularly well; that it was his intention to remove to a different part of the kingdom and take a farm; and that nothing prevented him from having done this before but the want of a helpmate to take care of his establishment. He added that his present wife was of an intolerable temper, and a greater villain by fifty degrees than himself. He concluded by saying that his conscience twitched him night and day for living with her, and that, by abandoning her immediately, becoming truly religious, and taking Anne in her place, he hoped, he said, to atone in some measure for his few errors.

Anthony, however, having noticed the earnestness which marked the pedlar's manner, suspected him of attempting to corrupt the principles of his daughter, having forgotten the influence which his own opinions were calculated to produce upon her heart.

"Martin," said he, "'twould be as well you ped attintion to what we're sayin' in regard o' the trial to-morrow, as to be palaverin' talk into the girl's ear that can't be good comin' from your lips. Quit it, I say, quit it! *Corp an duowol*—I won't allow such proceedings!"

"Swear till you blister your lips, Anthony," replied Martin; "as for me, bein' no residenthur, I'm not bound to it; an' what's more, I'm not suspected. 'Tis settin' some other bit o' work for yees I'll be, while you're all clearin' yourselves from stealin' honest Cassidy's horse. I wish we had him safely disposed of in the manetime, an' the money for him an' the other beasts in our pockets."

Much more conversation of a similar kind passed between them upon various topics connected with their profligacy and crimes. At length they separated for the night, after having concerted their plan of action for the ensuing scrutiny.

The next morning, before the hour appointed arrived, the parish, particularly the neighbourhood of Carnmore, was struck with deep consternation. Labour became suspended,

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mirth disappeared, and every face was marked with paleness, anxiety, and apprehension. If two men met, one shook his head mysteriously, and inquired from the other, "Did you hear the news?"

"Ay! ay! the Lord be about us all! I did; an' I pray God it may lave the counthry as it came to it!"

"Oh, an' that it may, I humbly make supplication this day!"

If two women met, it was with similar mystery and fear. "Vread, do you know what's at the Cassidys'?"

"Whisht, *ahagur!* I do; but let what will happen, sure it's best for us to say nothin'."

"Say!—the blessed Virgin forbid! I'd cut my hand off o' me afore I'd spake a word about it; only that——"

"Whisht, woman!—for mercy's sake—don't——"

And so they would separate, each crossing herself devoutly.

The meeting at Cassidy's was to take place that day at twelve o'clock; but about two hours before the appointed time, Anne, who had been in some of the other houses, came into her father's, quite pale, breathless, and trembling.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, with clasped hands, whilst the tears fell fast from her eyes, "we'll be lost—ruined! Did yees hear what's in the neighbourhood wid the Cassidys?"

"Girl," said the father, with more severity than he had ever manifested to her before, "I never yit ris my hand to you, but *ma corp an duonol*, if you open your lips, I'll fell you where you stand. Do you want that cowardly uncle o' yours to be the manes o' hangin' your father? Maybe that was one o' the lessons Martin gave you last night?" And as he spoke he knit his brows at her with that murderous scowl which was habitual to him. The girl trembled, and began to think that since her father's temper deepened in domestic outrage and violence as his crimes multiplied, the sooner she left the family the better. Every day indeed diminished that species of instinctive affection which she had entertained towards him, and this in proportion as her reason ripened into a capacity for comprehending the dark materials of which his character was composed.

"What's the matter now?" inquired Denis, with alarm. "Is it anything about us, Anthony?"

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"No, 'tisn't," replied the other, "anything about us! What ud it be about us for? 'Tis a lyin' report that some cunnin' knave spread, hopin' to find out the guilty. But hear me, Denis, once for all: we're going to clear ourselves—now listen, an' let my words sink deep into your heart—if you refuse to swear this day, no matther what's put into your hand, you'll do harm—that's all—have courage, man; but should you cow, you're coorse will be short; an' mark, even if *you* escape me, your sons won't. I have it all planned; an' *corp an duonvol!* thim you won't know from Adam will revinge me if I'm taken up through your unmanliness."

"Twould be betther for us to lave the counthry," said Anne. "We might slip away as it is."

"Ay," said the father, "an' be taken by the neck afore we'd get two miles from the place! No, no, *girsha;* it's the safest way to brazen thim out. Did you hear me, Denis?"

Denis started, for he had been evidently pondering on the mysterious words of Anne, to which his brother's anxiety to conceal them gave additional mystery. The coffin, too, recurred to him; and he feared that the death shadowed out by it would in some manner or other occur in the family. He was, in fact, one of those miserable villains with but half a conscience—that is to say, as much as makes them the slaves of the fear which results from crime, without being the slightest impediment to their committing it. It was no wonder he started at the deep, pervading tones of his brother's voice, for the question was put with ferocious energy.

On starting, he looked with vague terror on his brother, fearing, but not comprehending, his question.

"What is it, Anthony?" he inquired.

"Oh, for that matther," replied the other, "nothin' at all. Think of what I said to you, anyhow: swear through thick an' thin, if you have a regard for your own health or for your childher. Maybe I had betther repate it agin for you," he continued, eyeing him with mingled hatred and suspicion. "Denis, as a friend I bid you mind yourself this day, an' see you don't bring aither of us into throuble."

There lay before the Cassidys' houses a small flat of

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common, trodden into rings by the young horses they were in the habit of training. On this level space were assembled those who came, either to clear their own character from suspicion, or to witness the ceremony. The day was dark and lowering, and heavy clouds rolled slowly across the peaks of the surrounding mountains; scarcely a breath of air could be felt; and as the country people silently approached, such was the closeness of the day, their haste to arrive in time, and their general anxiety, either for themselves or their friends, that almost every man on reaching the spot might be seen taking up the skirts of his *cothamore*, or "big coat" (the peasant's handkerchief), to wipe the sweat from his brow; and as he took off his dingy woollen hat, or *caubeen*, the perspiration rose in strong exhalations from his head.

"Michael, am I in time?" might be heard from such persons as they arrived. "Did this business begin yit?"

"Full time, Larry; myself's here an hour ago, but no appearance of anything as yit. Father Farrell an' Squire Nicholson are both in Cassidy's, waitin' till they're all gother, whin they'll begin to put thim through their facins. You hard about what they've got?"

"No; for I'm only on my way home from the berril of a *cleaveen* of mine, that we put down this mornin' in Tullyard. What is it?"

"Why, man alive, it's through the whole parish inready!" He then went on, lowering his voice to a whisper, and speaking in a tone bordering on dismay.

The other crossed himself, and betrayed symptoms of awe and astonishment, not unmingled with fear.

"Well," he replied, "I dunna whether I'd come here if I'd known that; for, innocent or guilty, I wouldn't wish to be near it. Och, may God pity thim that's to come acrass it, espishly if they dare to do it in a lie!"

"They needn't, I can tell yees both," observed a third person, "be a hair afeard of it, for the best rason livin', that there's no thruth at all in the report, nor the Cassidys never thought of sindin' for anything o' the kind. I have it from Larry Cassidy's own lips, an' he ought to know best."

The truth is that two reports were current among the crowd: one, that the oath was to be simply on the Bible; and

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the other, that a more awful means of expurgation was to be resorted to by the Cassidys. The people, consequently, not knowing which to credit, felt the most painful of all sensations —uncertainty.

During the period which intervened between their assembling and the commencement of the ceremony, a spectator, interested in contemplating the workings of human nature in circumstances of deep interest, would have had ample scope for observation. The occasion was to them a solemn one. There was little conversation among them; for when a man is wound up to a pitch of great interest, he is seldom disposed to relish discourse. Every brow was anxious, every cheek blanched, and every arm folded: they scarcely stirred, or when they did, only with slow, abstracted movements, rather mechanical than voluntary. If an individual made his appearance about Cassidy's door, a sluggish stir among them was visible, and a low murmur of a peculiar character might be heard; but on perceiving that it was only some ordinary person, all subsided again into a brooding stillness that was equally singular and impressive.

Under this peculiar feeling was the multitude when Meehan and his brother were seen approaching it from their own house. The elder, with folded arms, and hat pulled over his brows, stalked grimly forward, having that remarkable scowl upon his face which had contributed to establish for him so diabolical a character. Denis walked by his side, with his countenance strained to inflation—a miserable parody of that sullen effrontery which marked the unshrinking miscreant beside him. He had not heard of the ordeal, owing to the caution of Anthony, but notwithstanding his effort at indifference, a keen eye might have observed the latent anxiety of a man who was habitually villainous and naturally timid.

When this pair entered the crowd, a few secret glances, too rapid to be noticed by the people, passed between them and their accomplices. Denis, on seeing them present, took fresh courage, and looked with the heroism of a blusterer upon those who stood about him, especially whenever he found himself under the scrutinising eye of his brother. Such was the horror and detestation in which they were held, that on advancing into the assembly the persons on each side

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turned away and openly avoided them; eyes full of fierce hatred were bent on them vindictively; and "curses, not loud, but deep," were muttered with an indignation which nothing but a divided state of feeling could repress within due limits. Every glance, however, was paid back by Anthony with interest from eyes and black shaggy brows tremendously ferocious; and his curses, as they rolled up half-smothered from his huge chest, were deeper and more diabolical by far than their own. He even jeered at them; but there was something truly appalling in the dark gleam of his scoff which threw them at an immeasurable distance behind him in the power of displaying on the countenance the worst of human passions.

At length Mr. Nicholson, Father Farrell, and his curate, attended by the Cassidys and their friends, issued from the house; two or three servants preceded them, bearing a table and chairs for the magistrate and priests, who, however, stood during the ceremony. When they entered one of the rings before alluded to, the table and chairs were placed in the centre of it, and Father Farrell, as possessing most influence over the people, addressed them very impressively.

"There are," said he, in conclusion, "persons in this crowd whom we know to be guilty; but we will have an opportunity of now witnessing the lengths to which crime, long indulged in, can carry them. To such people I would say, beware! for they know not the situation in which they are placed."

During all this time there was not the slightest allusion made to the mysterious ordeal which had excited so much awe and apprehension among them—a circumstance which occasioned many a pale, downcast face to clear up, and reassume its usual cheerful expression. The crowd now were assembled around the ring, and every man on whom an imputation had been fastened came forward, when called upon, to the table at which the priests and magistrate stood uncovered. The form of the oath was framed by the two clergymen, who, as they knew the reservations and evasions commonest among such characters, had ingeniously contrived not to leave a single loophole through which the consciences of those who belonged to this worthy fraternity might escape.

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To those acquainted with Irish courts of justice there was nothing particularly remarkable in the swearing. Indeed, one who stood among the crowd might hear from those who were stationed at the greatest distance from the table such questions as the following:—

"Is the *thing* in it, Art?"

"No; 'tis nothin' but the law Bible, the magistrate's own one."

To this the querist would reply, with a satisfied nod of the head, "Oh, is that all? I heard they war to have *it;*" on which he would push himself through the crowd until he reached the table, where he took his oath as readily as another.

"Jem Hartigan," said the magistrate to one of those persons, "are you to swear?"

"Faix, myself doesn't know, your honour; only that I hard them say that the Cassidys mintioned our names along wid many other honest people; an' one wouldn't, in that case, lie under a false report, your honour, from any one, when we're as clear as them that never saw the light of anything of the kind."

The magistrate then put the book into his hand, and Jem, in return, fixed his eye, with much apparent innocence, on his face. "Now, Jem Hartigan," &c., &c., and the oath was accordingly administered. Jem put the book to his mouth, with his thumb raised to an acute angle on the back of it; nor was the smack by any means a silent one which he gave it (his thumb).

The magistrate set his ear with the air of a man who had experience in discriminating such sounds. "Hartigan," said he, "you'll condescend to kiss the book, sir, if you please; there's a hollowness in that smack, my good fellow, that can't escape me."

"Not kiss it, your honour? Why, by this staff in my hand, if ever a man kissed——"

"Silence, you impostor," said the curate; "I watched you closely, and am confident your lips never touched the book."

"My lips never touched the book! Why, you know I'd be sarry to conthradict either o' yees; but I was jist goin' to observe, wid simmission, that my own lips ought to know

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best; an' don't you hear them tellin' you that they did kiss it?" and he grinned with confidence in their faces.

"You double-dealing reprobate," said the parish priest, "I'll lay my whip across your jaws. I saw you, too, an' you did not kiss the book."

"By dad, an' maybe I did not, sure enough," he replied. "Any man may make a mistake unknownst to himself; but I'd give my oath, an' be the five crasses, I kissed it as sure as—however, a good thing's never the worse o' bein' twice done, gintlemen; so here goes, jist to satisfy yees," and placing the book near his mouth, and altering his position a little, he appeared to comply, though, on the contrary, he touched neither it nor his thumb. "It's the same thing to me," he continued, laying down the book with an air of confident assurance—"it's the same thing to me if I kissed it fifty times over, which I'm ready to do if that doesn't satisfy yees."

As every man acquitted himself of the charges brought against him, the curate immediately took down his name. Indeed, before the "clearing" commenced, he requested that such as were to swear would stand together within the ring, that after having sworn, he might hand each of them a certificate of the fact, which they appeared to think might be serviceable to them, should they happen to be subsequently indicted for the same crime in a court of justice. This, however, was only a plan to keep them together for what was soon to take place.

The detections of thumb-kissing were received by those who had already sworn, and by several in the outward crowd, with much mirth. It is but justice, however, to many of those assembled, to state that they appeared to entertain a serious opinion of the nature of the ceremony, and no small degree of abhorrence against those who seemed to trifle with the solemnity of an oath.

Standing on the edge of the circle, in the innermost row, were Meehan and his brother. The former eyed, with all the hardness of a stoic, the successive individuals as they passed up to the table. His accomplices had gone forward, and to the surprise of many who strongly suspected them, in the most indifferent manner "cleared" themselves, in the

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trying words of the oath, of all knowledge of and participation in the thefts that had taken place.

The grim visage of the elder Meehan was marked by a dark smile, scarcely perceptible; but his brother, whose nerves were not so firm, appeared somewhat confused and distracted by the imperturbable villainy of the perjurers.

At length they were called up. Anthony advanced slowly but collectedly to the table, only turning his eye slightly about to observe if his brother accompanied him. "Denis," said he, "which of us will swear first? You may;" for as he doubted his brother's firmness, he was prudent enough, should he fail, to guard against having the sin of perjury to answer for, along with those demands which his country had to make for his other crimes. Denis took the book, and cast a slight glance at his brother, as if for encouragement. Their eyes met, and the darkened brow of Anthony hinted at the danger of flinching in this crisis. The tremor of his hand was not, perhaps, visible to any but Anthony, who, however, did not overlook this circumstance. He held the book, but raised not his eye to meet the looks of either the magistrate or the priests; the colour also left his face as with shrinking lips he touched the Word of God in deliberate falsehood. Having then laid it down, Anthony received it with a firm grasp, and whilst his eye turned boldly in contemptuous mockery upon those who presented it, he impressed it with the kiss of a man whose depraved conscience seemed to goad him only to evil. After "clearing" himself he laid the Bible upon the table with the affected air of a person who felt hurt at the imputation of theft, and joined the rest with a frown upon his countenance and a smothered curse upon his lips.

Just at this moment a person from Cassidy's house laid upon the table a small box covered with black cloth; and our readers will be surprised to hear that if fire had come down visibly from heaven, greater awe and fear could not have been struck into their hearts or depicted upon their countenances. The casual conversation, and the commentaries upon the ceremony they had witnessed, instantly settled into a most profound silence, and every eye was turned towards it with an interest absolutely fearful.

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"Let," said the curate, "none of those who have sworn depart from within the ring until they once more clear themselves upon this," and as he spoke he held it up. "Behold!" said he, "and tremble—behold THE DONAGH!!!"

A low murmur of awe and astonishment burst from the people in general, whilst those within the ring, who, with few exceptions, were the worst characters in the parish, appeared ready to sink into the earth. Their countenances, for the most part, paled into the condemned hue of guilt; many of them became almost unable to stand; and altogether, the state of trepidation and terror in which they stood was strikingly wild and extraordinary.

The curate proceeded: "Let him now who is guilty depart; or if he wishes, advance, and challenge the awful penalty annexed to perjury upon THIS! Who has ever been known to swear falsely upon the Donagh without being visited by a tremendous punishment, either on the spot, or in twenty-four hours after his perjury? If we ourselves have not seen such instances with our own eyes, it is because none liveth who dare incur such a dreadful penalty; but we have heard of those who did, and of their awful punishment afterwards. Sudden death, madness, paralysis, self-destruction, or the murder of some one dear to them, are the marks by which perjury on the Donagh is known and visited. Advance now, ye who are innocent; but let the guilty withdraw, for we do not desire to witness the terrible vengeance which would attend a false oath upon the DONAGH. Pause, therefore, and be cautious! for if this grievous sin be committed, a heavy punishment will fall, not only upon you, but upon the parish in which it occurs!"

The words of the priest sounded to the guilty like the death-sentence of a judge. Before he had concluded, all, except Meehan and his brother and a few who were really innocent, had slunk back out of the circle into the crowd. Denis, however, became pale as a corpse, and from time to time wiped the large drops from his haggard brow. Even Anthony's cheek, despite of his natural callousness, was less red; his eyes became disturbed; but by their influence he contrived to keep Denis in sufficient dread to prevent him from mingling, like the rest, among the people. The few

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who remained along with them advanced, and notwithstanding their innocence, when the Donagh was presented, and the figure of Christ and the Twelve Apostles displayed in the solemn tracery of its rude carving, they exhibited symptoms of fear. With trembling hands they touched the Donagh, and with trembling lips kissed the crucifix, in attestation of their guiltlessness of the charge of which they had been accused.

"Anthony and Denis Meehan, come forward," said the curate, "and declare your innocence of the crimes with which you are charged by the Cassidys and others."

Anthony advanced; but Denis stood rooted to the ground; on perceiving which the former sternly returned a step or two, and catching him by the arm with an admonitory grip that could not easily be misunderstood, compelled him to proceed with himself step by step to the table. Denis, however, could feel the strong man tremble, and perceive that although he strove to lash himself into the energy of despair, and the utter disbelief of all religious sanction, yet the trial before him called every slumbering prejudice and apprehension of his mind into active power. This was a death-blow to his own resolution, or, rather, it confirmed him in his previous determination not to swear on the Donagh, except to acknowledge his guilt, which he could scarcely prevent himself from doing, such was the vacillating state of mind to which he felt himself reduced.

When Anthony reached the table his huge form seemed to dilate by his effort at maintaining the firmness necessary to support him in this awful struggle between conscience and superstition on the one hand, and guilt, habit, and infidelity on the other. He fixed his deep, dilated eyes upon the Donagh in a manner that betokened somewhat of irresolution; his countenance fell; his colour came and went, but eventually settled in a flushed red; his powerful hands and arms trembled so much that he folded them to prevent his agitation from being noticed; the grimness of his face ceased to be stern, while it retained the blank expression of guilt; his temples swelled out with the terrible play of their blood-vessels; his chest, too, heaved up and down with the united pressure of guilt and the tempest which shook him within.

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At length he saw Denis's eye upon him, and his passions took a new direction: he knit his brows at him with more than usual fierceness, ground his teeth, and with a step and action of suppressed fury he placed his foot at the edge of the table, and bowing down under the eye of God and man, took the awful oath on the mysterious Donagh in a falsehood! When it was finished a feeble groan broke from his brother's lips. Anthony bent his eye on him with a deadly glare; but Denis saw it not. The shock was beyond his courage—he had become insensible.

Those who stood at the outskirts of the crowd, seeing Denis apparently lifeless, thought he must have sworn falsely on the Donagh, and exclaimed, "He's dead! Gracious God! Denis Meehan's struck dead by the Donagh! He swore in a lie, and is now a corpse!" Anthony paused, and calmly surveyed him as he lay with his head resting upon the hands of those who supported him. At this moment a silent breeze came over where they stood, and as the Donagh lay upon the table, the black ribbons with which it was ornamented fluttered with a melancholy appearance that deepened the sensations of the people into something peculiarly solemn and preternatural. Denis at length revived, and stared wildly and vacantly about him. When composed sufficiently to distinguish and recognise individual objects, he looked upon the gloomy visage and threatening eye of his brother, and shrunk back with a terror almost epileptical. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "save me!—save me from that man, and I'll discover all!"

Anthony calmly folded one arm into his bosom, and his lip quivered with the united influence of hatred and despair.

"Hould him!" shrieked a voice, which proceeded from his daughter—"hould my father, or he'll murdher him! Oh! oh! merciful Heaven!"

Ere the words were uttered she had made an attempt to clasp the arms of her parent, whose motions she understood; but only in time to receive from the pistol, which he had concealed in his breast, the bullet aimed at her uncle! She tottered; and the blood spouted out of her neck upon her father's brows, who hastily put up his hand and wiped it away, for it had actually blinded him.

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The elder Meehan was a tall man, and as he stood elevated nearly a head above the crowd, his grim brows red with his daughter's blood—which, in attempting to wipe away, he had deeply streaked across his face—his eyes shooting fiery gleams of his late resentment, mingled with the wildness of unexpected horror—as he thus stood, it would be impossible to contemplate a more revolting picture of that state to which the principles that had regulated his life must ultimately lead, even in this world.

On perceiving what he had done, the deep working of his powerful frame was struck into sudden stillness, and he turned his eyes on his bleeding daughter with a fearful perception of her situation. Now was the harvest of his creed and crimes reaped in blood; and he felt that the stroke which had fallen upon him was one of those by which God will sometimes bare His arm and vindicate His justice. The reflection, however, shook him not; the reality of his misery was too intense and pervading, and grappled too strongly with his hardened and unbending spirit, to waste its power upon a nerve or a muscle. It was abstracted, and beyond the reach of bodily suffering. From the moment his daughter fell he moved not; his lips were half open with the conviction produced by the blasting truth of her death, effected prematurely by his own hand.

Those parts of his face which had not been stained with her blood assumed an ashy paleness, and rendered his countenance more terrific by the contrast. Tall, powerful, and motionless, he appeared, to the crowd, glaring at the girl, like a tiger anxious to join his offspring, yet stunned with the shock of the bullet which has touched a vital part. His iron-grey hair, as it fell in thick masses about his neck was moved slightly by the blast, and a lock which fell over his temple was blown back with a motion rendered more distinct by his statue-like attitude, immovable as death.

A silent and awful gathering of the people around this impressive scene intimated their knowledge of what they considered to be a judicial punishment annexed to perjury upon the Donagh. This relic lay on the table, and the eyes of those who stood within view of it, turned from Anthony's countenance to it, and again back to his blood-

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stained visage, with all the overwhelming influence of superstitious fear. Shudderings, tremblings, crossings, and ejaculations marked their conduct and feeling; for though the incident in itself was simply a fatal and uncommon one, yet they considered it supernatural and miraculous.

At length a loud and agonising cry burst from the lips of Meehan—"Oh, God!—God of heaven an' earth!—have I murdhered my daughter?" and he cast down the fatal weapon with a force which buried it some inches into the wet clay.

The crowd had closed upon Anne; but with the strength of a giant he flung them aside, caught the girl in his arms, and pressed her bleeding to his bosom. He gasped for breath. "Anne," said he,—"Anne, I am without hope, an' there's none to forgive me except you—none at all: from God to the poorest of His creatures, I am hated an' cursed by all except you! Don't curse me, Anne—don't curse me. Oh, isn't it enough, darlin', that my sowl is now stained with your blood, along with my other crimes? Oh, think, darlin', of my broken heart! In hell, on earth, an' in heaven, there's none to forgive your father but yourself!—NONE! NONE! Oh, what's comin' over me! I'm dizzy an' shiverin'! How cowld the day's got of a sudden! Hould up, *avourneen mackree!* I was a bad man; but to you, Anne, I was not as I was to every one! Darlin', oh, look at me with forgiveness in your eye; or, anyway, don't curse me! Oh! I'm far cowlder now! Tell me that you forgive me, *acushla oge machree!—Manim asthee hu,* darlin', say it. I DARN'T LOOK TO GOD! but oh! do you say the forgivin' word to your father before you die!"

"Father," said she, "I deserve this—it's only just. I had plotted with that divilish Martin to betray them all, except yourself, an' to get the reward; an' then we intended to go—an'—live at a distance—an' in wickedness—where we—might not be known. He's at our house—let him be—secured. Forgive me, father; you said so often that there was no thruth in religion—that I began to—think so. Oh!—God! have mercy upon me!" and with these words she expired.

Meehan's countenance, on hearing this, was overspread

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with a ghastly look of the most desolating agony; he staggered back, and the body of his daughter, which he strove to hold, would have fallen from his arms, had it not been caught by the bystanders. His eye sought out his brother, but not in resentment. "Oh! she died, but didn't say, 'I FORGIVE YOU!' Denis, bring me home—I'm sick—very sick—oh, but it's cowld—everything's reeling—cowld—cowld it is!" and as he uttered the last words he shuddered, fell down in a fit of apoplexy, never to rise again; and the bodies of his daughter and himself were both waked and buried together.

The result is brief. The rest of the gang were secured; Denis became approver, by whose evidence they suffered that punishment decreed by law to the crimes of which they had been guilty. The two events which we have just related of course added to the supernatural fear and reverence previously entertained for this terrible relic. It is still used as an ordeal of expurgation in cases of stolen property; and we are not wrong in asserting that many of those misguided creatures, who too frequently hesitate not to swear falsely on the Word of God, would suffer death itself sooner than commit a perjury on the Donagh.

The story of the Donagh, the author has reason to believe, was the means of first bringing this curious piece of antiquity into notice. There is little to be added here to what is in the sketch concerning its influence over the people, and the use of it as a blessed relic, sought for by those who wished to apply a certain test of guilt or innocence to such well-known thieves as scrupled not to perjure themselves on the Bible. For this purpose it was a perfect conscience-trap, the most hardened miscreant never having been known to risk a false oath upon it. Many singular anecdotes are related concerning it.

The following is an extract from a most interesting and authentic history of it contributed by our great Irish antiquarian, George Petrie, Esq., R.H.A., M.R.I.A., to the 18th vol. of the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, together

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with an engraving of it taken from a drawing made by the same accomplished artist:—

"I shall endeavour to arrange these evidences in consecutive order.

"1. It is of importance to prove that this *cumdach*, or reliquary, has been from time immemorial popularly known by the name of *Domnach*, or, as it is pronounced, Donagh, a word derived from the Latin *Dominicus*. This fact is proved by a recent popular tale of very great power, by Mr. Carleton, called the 'Donagh,' in which the superstitious uses to which this reliquary has been long applied are ably exhibited, and made subservient to the interests of the story. It is also particularly described under this name by the Rev. John Groves, in his account of the parish of Errigal-Keeroge, in the third volume of Shaw Mason's Parochial Survey, page 163, though, as the writer states, it was not actually preserved in that parish.

"2. The inscriptions on the external case leave no doubt that the Domnach belonged to the monastery of Clones, or see of Clogher. The John O'Karbri, the *Comharb*, or successor of St. Tighernach, recorded in one of those inscriptions as the person at whose cost, or by whose permission, the outer ornamental case was made, was, according to the Annals of the Four Masters, Abbot of Clones, and died in the year 1353. He is properly called in that inscription *Comorbanus*, or successor of Tighernach, who was the first Abbot and Bishop of the Church of Clones, to which place, after the death of St. Mac-Carthen in the year 506, he removed the see of Clogher, having erected a new church, which he dedicated to the apostles Peter and Paul. St. Tighernach, according to all our ancient authorities, died in the year 548.

"3. It appears from a fragment of an ancient life of St. Mac-Carthen, preserved by Colgan, that a remarkable reliquary was given by St. Patrick to that saint when he placed him over the see of Clogher.

"'Et addidit, [Patricius] Accipe, inquit, baculum itineris mei, quo ego membra mea sustento et scrinium in quo de sanctorum Apostolorum reliquiis, et de sanctæ Mariæ capillis, et sancta Cruce Domini, et sepulchro ejus, et aliis reliquiis sanctis continentur. Quibus dictis dimisit cum osculo pacis paterna fultum benedictione.' —*Colgan, Vit. S. Macaerthenni* (24 Mart.) Acta SS. p. 738.

"From this passage we learn one great cause of the sanctity in which this reliquary was held, and of the uses of the several recesses for reliques which it presents. It also explains the historical *rilievo* on the top—the figure of St. Patrick presenting the Domnach to St. Mac-Carthen.

"4. In Jocelyn's Life of St. Patrick (cap. 143), we have also a notice to the same effect, but in which the Domnach is called a

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Chrismatorium, and the relics are not specified—in all probability because they were not then appended to it.

"In these authorities there is evidently much appearance of the monkish frauds of the middle ages; but still they are evidences of the tradition of the country that such a gift had been made by Patrick to Mac-Carthen. And as we advance higher in chronological authorities, we find the notice of this gift stripped of much of its acquired garb of fiction, and related with more of the simplicity of truth.

"5. In the life of St. Patrick called the Tripartite, usually ascribed to St. Evin, an author of the seventh century, and which, even in its present interpolated state, is confessedly prior to the tenth, there is the following remarkable passage (as translated by Colgan from the original Irish) relative to the gift of the Domnach from the Apostle of Ireland to St. Mac-Carthen, in which it is expressly described under the very same appellation which it still bears.

"'Aliquantis ergo evolutis diebus *Mac-Caertennum*, sive *Caerthennum* Episcopum præfecit sedi Episcopali Clocherensi, ab Ardmacha regni Metropoli haud multum distanti: et apud eum reliquit argenteum quoddam reliquiarium *Domnach-airgidh* vulgò nuncupatum; quod viro Dei, in Hiberniam venienti, cœlitus missum erat.'—*VII. Vita S. Patricii*, Lib. III. cap. 3, *Tr. Th.* p. 149.

"This passage is elsewhere given by Colgan, with a slight change of words in the translation.

"In this version, which is unquestionably prior to all the others, we find the Domnach distinguished by the appellation of *Airgid*—an addition which was applicable only to its more ancient or *silver* plated case, and which could not with propriety be applied to its more recent covering, which in its original state had the appearance of being of gold.

"On these evidences—and more might probably be procured if time had allowed—we may, I think, with tolerable certainty, rest the following conclusions:—

"1. That the Domnach is the identical reliquary given by St. Patrick to Mac-Carthen.

"2. As the form of the cumdach indicates that it was intended to receive a book, and as the relics are all attached to the outer and the least ancient cover, it is manifest that the use of the box as a reliquary was not its original intention. The natural inference therefore is, that it contained a manuscript which had belonged to St. Patrick; and as a manuscript copy of the Gospels, apparently of that early age, is found within it, there is every reason to believe it to be that identical one for which the box was originally made, and which the Irish apostle probably brought with him on his mission into this country. It is indeed not merely possible, but even probable, that the existence of this manuscript was unknown to the monkish

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biographers of St. Patrick and St. Mac-Carthen, who speak of the box as a *scrinium* or reliquary only. The outer cover was evidently not made to open; and some, at least, of the relics attached to it were not introduced into Ireland before the twelfth century. It will be remembered also that no superstition was and is more common in connexion with the ancient cumdachs than the dread of their being opened.

"These conclusions will, I think, be strengthened considerably by the facts, that the word *Domnach*, as applied either to a church, as usual, or to a reliquary, as in this instance, is only to be found in our histories in connexion with St. Patrick's time; and that in the latter sense—its application to a reliquary—it only once occurs in all our ancient authorities, namely, in the single reference to the gift to St. Mac-Carthen; no other reliquary in Ireland, as far as can be ascertained, having ever been known by that appellation. And it should also be observed, that all the ancient reliques preserved in Ireland, whether bells, books, croziers, or other remains, have invariably and without any single exception been preserved and venerated only as appertaining to the original founders of the churches to which they belonged."

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PHIL PURCEL, THE PIG-DRIVER

AN OUTLINE

PHIL PURCEL was a singular character, for he was never married; but notwithstanding his singularity, no man ever possessed, for practical purposes, a more plentiful stock of duplicity. All his acquaintances knew that Phil was a knave of the first water, yet was he decidedly a general favourite. Now, as we hate mystery ourselves, we shall reveal the secret of this remarkable popularity; though, after all, it can scarcely be called so, for Phil was not the first cheat who has been popular in his day. The cause of his success lay simply in this—that he never laughed; and none of our readers need be told that the appearance of a grave cheat in Ireland is an originality which almost runs up into a miracle. This gravity induced every one to look upon him as a phenomenon. The assumed simplicity of his manners was astonishing, and the ignorance which he feigned so apparently natural that it was scarcely possible for the most keen-sighted searcher into human motives to detect him. The only way of understanding the man was to deal with him; if after *that*, you did not comprehend him thoroughly, the fault was not Phil's, but your own. Although not mirthful himself, he was the cause of mirth in others; for without ever smiling at his own gains, he contrived to make others laugh at their losses. His disposition, setting aside laughter, was strictly anomalous. The most incompatible, the most unamalgamatable, and the most uncomeatable qualities that ever refused to unite in the same individual, had no scruple to unite in Phil. But we hate metaphysics, which we leave to the mechanical philosophers, and proceed to state that Phil was a miser, which is the best explanation we can give of his gravity.

Ireland, owing to the march of intellect, and the superiority

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of modern refinement, has been for some years past, and is at present, well supplied with an abundant variety of professional men, every one of whom will undertake, for proper considerations, to teach us Irish all manner of useful accomplishments. The drawing-master talks of his "profession"; the dancing-master of *his* profession; the fiddler, tooth-drawer, and corn-cutter (who, by the way, reaps a richer harvest than we do), since the devil has tempted the schoolmaster to go abroad, are all practising in his absence as professional men.

Now Phil must be included among this class of grandiloquent gentlemen, for he entered life as a Professor of Pig-driving; and it is but justice towards him to assert that no corn-cutter of them all ever elevated his profession so high as Phil did that in which he practised. In fact, he raised it to the most exalted pitch of improvement of which it was then susceptible; or, to use the cant of the day, he soon arrived at "the head of his profession."

In Phil's time, however, pig-driving was not so general, nor had it made such rapid advances as in modern times. It was then simply pig-driving, unaccompanied by the improvements of poverty, sickness, and famine. The governments of those days were not so enlightened as the governments of these. Political economy had not taught the people how to be poor upon the most scientific principles; free trade had not shown the nation the most improved plan of reducing itself to the lowest possible state of distress; nor liberalism enabled the working-classes to scoff at religion, and wisely to stop at the very line that lies between outrage and rebellion. Many errors and inconveniences, now happily exploded, were then in existence. The people, it is true, were somewhat attached to their landlords; but still they were burdened with the unnecessary appendages of good coats and stout shoes; were tolerably industrious, and had the mortification of being able to pay their rent, and feed in comfort. They were not, as they are now, free from new coats and old prejudices, nor improved by the intellectual march of politics and poverty. When either a man or a nation starves, it is a luxury to starve in an enlightened manner; and nothing is more consolatory to a person acquainted with public rights and constitutional

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privileges than to understand those liberal principles upon which he fasts and goes naked.

From all we have said, the reader sees clearly that pig-driving did not then proceed upon so extensive a scale as it does at present. The people, in fact, killed many of them for their own use; and we know not how it happened, but political ignorance and good bacon kept them in more flesh and comfort than those theories which have since succeeded so well in introducing the science of starvation as the basis of national prosperity. Irishmen are frequently taxed with extravagance, in addition to their other taxes; but we should be glad to know what people in Europe reduce economy in the articles of food and clothing to such close practice as they do. Our governments and our landlords appear to be trying such an experiment upon our great power of living on a little food as the man did who entertained the warm expectation of being able to bring his horse to live without it, but who, when he had brought him to one straw *per diem*, found that the animal was compelled to decline the comforts of such economy, by dying in his own defence. In our ignorant days we had a trade, but no custom-house; and now, in our enlightened days, we have a custom-house, but no trade. Our institutions have become absentees, like our landlords, and are to be found spending their money in London, in order to increase the prosperity and secure the attachment of Irishmen.

An old bachelor uncle of ours in the country, seduced by the plausibility of a tailor's puff in the metropolis, sent him, in reliance upon what he professed in it, his height and weight for a suit of clothes. The clothes came; but as the old gentleman happened to be wry-necked—wore his head, in fact, upon one of his shoulders—and was a little humpbacked into the bargain—points which he either forgot, or declined mentioning—it is unnecessary to say that the clothes did not fit.

"I ought to have known," said the old gentleman, "from the peculiarity of my make, that no tailor could fit me without taking my measure."

In like manner may we say that England is legislating for us without taking our measure; and that her laws conse-

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quently are a bad fit, considering the unconscionable price we pay for them.

There was in Ireland an old breed of swine which is now nearly extinct, except in some remote parts of the country, where they are still useful in the hunting season, particularly if dogs happen to be scarce.[1] They were a tall, loose species, with legs of an unusual length, with no flesh, short ears, as if they had been cropped for sedition, and with long faces of a highly intellectual cast. They were also of such activity that few greyhounds could clear a ditch or cross a field with more agility or speed. Their backs formed a rainbow arch, capable of being contracted or extended to an inconceivable degree; and their usual rate of travelling in droves was at mail-coach speed, or six Irish miles an hour, preceded by an outrider to clear the way, whilst their rear was brought up by another horseman going at a three-quarter gallop.

In the middle of summer, when all nature reposed under the united influence of heat and dust, it was an interesting sight to witness a drove of them sweeping past, like a whirlwind, in a cloud of their own raising—their sharp and lengthy outlines dimly visible through the shining haze, like a flock of antelopes crossing the deserts of the East.

But, alas, for those happy days! This breed is now a curiosity—few specimens of it remaining, except in the mountainous parts of the country, whither these lovers of liberty, like the free natives of the back settlements of America, have retired to avoid the encroachments of civilisation, and exhibit their Irish antipathy to the slavish comforts of steamboat navigation, and the relaxing luxuries of English feeding.

Their education, it is true, was not neglected, and their instructors had the satisfaction of seeing that it was not lost. Nothing could present a finer display of true friendship, founded upon a sense of equality, mutual interest, and goodwill, than the Irishman and his pig. The Arabian and his horse are proverbial; but had our English neighbours known as much of Ireland as they did of Arabia, they would have

[1] We assure John Bull, on the authority of Phil Purcel, that this is a fact.

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found as signal instances of attachment subsisting between the former as between the latter; and perhaps, when the superior comforts of an Arabian hut are contrasted with the squalid poverty of an Irish cabin, they would have perceived a heroism and a disinterestedness evinced by the Irish parties that would have struck them with greater admiration.

The education of an Irish pig, at the time of which we write, was an important consideration to an Irishman. He and his family and his pig, like the Arabian and his horse, all slept in the same bed—the pig generally, for the sake of convenience, next the "stock."[1] At meals the pig usually was stationed at the *scrahag*, or potato-basket; where the only instances of bad temper he ever displayed broke out in petty and unbecoming squabbles with the younger branches of the family. Indeed, if he ever descended from his high station as a member of the domestic circle, it was upon these occasions, when, with a want of dignity accounted for only by the grovelling motive of self-interest, he embroiled himself in a series of miserable feuds and contentions about scraping the pot, or carrying off from the jealous urchins about him more than came to his share. In these heart-burnings about the good things of this world he was treated with uncommon forbearance. In his master he always had a friend, from whom, when he grunted out his appeal to him, he was certain of receiving redress. "Barney, behave, *avick!* lay down the pot-stick, an' don't be batin' the pig, the crathur."

In fact, the pig was never mentioned but with this endearing epithet of "crathur" annexed. "Barney, go an' call home the pig, the crathur, to his dinner, before it gets cowld an him." "Barney, go an' see if you can see the pig, the crathur; his breckwhist will soon be ready." "Barney, run an' dhrive the pig, the crathur, out of Larry Neil's phatie-field; an', Barney, whisper, *a bouchal bawn*, don't run too hard, Barney, for fraid you'd lose your breath. What if the crathur does get a taste o' the new phaties—small blame to him for the same!"

In short, whatever might have been the habits of the family, such were those of the pig. The latter was usually

[1] That is, at the outside.

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out early in the morning to take exercise, and the unerring regularity with which he returned at meal-time gave sufficient proof that procuring an appetite was a work of supererogation on his part. If he came before the meal was prepared, his station was at the door, which they usually shut to keep him out of the way until it should be ready. In the meantime, so far as a forenoon serenade and an indifferent voice could go, his powers of melody were freely exercised on the outside. But he did not stop here; every stretch of ingenuity was tried by which a possibility of gaining admittance could be established. The hat and rags were repeatedly driven in from the windows, which from practice and habit he was enabled to approach on his hind legs; a cavity was also worn by the frequent grubbings of his snout under the door, the lower part of which was broken away by the sheer strength of his tusks, so that he was enabled, by thrusting himself between the bottom of it and the ground, to make a most unexpected appearance on the hearth before his presence was at all convenient or acceptable.

But independently of these two modes of entrance—*i.e.*, the door and window—there was also a third by which he sometimes scrupled not to make a descent upon the family. This was by the chimney. There are many of the Irish cabins built for economy's sake against slopes in the ground, so that the labour of erecting either a gable or side-wall is saved by the perpendicular bank that remains after the site of the house is scooped away. Of the facilities presented by this peculiar structure the pig never failed to avail himself. He immediately mounted the roof (through which, however, he sometimes took an unexpected flight), and traversing it with caution, reached the chimney, into which he deliberately backed himself, and, with no small share of courage, went down precisely as the northern bears are said to descend the trunks of trees during the winter, but with far different motives.

In this manner he cautiously retrograded downwards with a hardihood which set furze-bushes, brooms, tongs, and all other available weapons of the cabin at defiance. We are bound, however, to declare that this mode of entrance, which was only resorted to when every other failed, was usually

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received by the cottager and his family with a degree of mirth and good-humour that were not lost upon the sagacity of the pig. In order to save him from being scorched, which he deserved for his temerity, they usually received him in a creel, often in a quilt, and sometimes in the tattered blanket, or large pot, out of which he looked with a humorous conception of his own enterprise that was highly diverting. We must admit, however, that he was sometimes received with the comforts of a hot poker, which Paddy pleasantly called "givin' him a warm welcome."

Another trait in the character of these animals was the utter scorn with which they treated all attempts to fatten them. In fact, the usual consequences of good feeding were almost inverted in their case; and although I might assert that they became leaner in proportion to what they received, yet I must confine myself to truth by stating candidly that this was not the fact; that there was a certain state of fleshlessness to which they arrived, but from which they neither advanced nor receded by good feeding or bad.

At this point, despite of all human ingenuity, they remained stationary for life; received the bounty afforded them with a greatness of appetite resembling the fortitude of a brave man, which rises in energy according to the magnitude of that which it has to encounter. The truth is, they were scandalous hypocrites; for with the most prodigious capacity for food, they were spare as philosophers, and fitted evidently more for the chase than the sty—rather to run down a buck or a hare for the larder, than to have a place in it themselves. If you starved them, they defied you to diminish their flesh; and if you stuffed them like aldermen, they took all they got, but disdained to carry a single ounce more than if you gave them whey thickened with water. In short, they gloried in maceration and liberty; were good Irish scholars, sometimes acquainted with Latin; and their flesh, after the trouble of separating it from a superfluity of tough skin, was excellent "venison" so far as it went.

Now, Phil Purcel, whom we will introduce more intimately to the reader by-and-by, was the son of a man who always kept a pig. His father's house had a small loft, to which the ascent was by a step-ladder through a door in the inside

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gable. The first good thing ever Phil was noticed for was said upon the following occasion. His father happened to be called upon, one morning before breakfast, by his landlord, who, it seems, occasionally visited his tenantry to encourage, direct, stimulate, or reprove them, as the case might require. Phil was a boy then, and sat on the hob in the corner, eyeing the landlord and his father during their conversation. In the meantime the pig came in, and deliberately began to ascend the ladder with an air of authority that marked him as one in the exercise of an established right. The landlord was astonished at seeing the animal enter the best room in the house, and could not help expressing his surprise to old Purcel.

"Why, Purcel, is your pig in the habit of treating himself to the comforts of your best room?"

"The pig is it, the crathur? Why, your haner," said Purcel, after a little hesitation, "it sometimes goes up of a mornin' to waken the childher, particularly when the breckwhist happens to be late. It doesn't like to be waitin'; and, sure, none of us like to be kept from the male's mate, your haner, when we want it, no more than it, the crathur."

"But I wonder your wife permits so filthy an animal to have access to her rooms in this manner."

"Filthy!" replied Mrs. Purcel, who felt herself called upon to defend the character of the pig as well as her own —"why, one would think, sir, that any crathur that's among Christyeen childher, like one o' themselves, couldn't be filthy. I could take it to my dyin' day, that there's not a claner or dacenter pig in the kingdom than the same pig. It never misbehaves, the crathur, but goes out, as wise an' riglar, jist by a look, your haner, the poor crathur!"

"I think," observed Phil, from the hob, "that nobody has a betther right to the run of the house, whedher upstairs or downstairs, than him that pays the rint."

"Well said, my lad!" observed the landlord, laughing at the quaint ingenuity of Phil's defence. "His payment of the rent is the best defence possible, and no doubt should cover a multitude of his errors."

"A multitude of his shins you mane, sir," said Phil; "for, thrath, he's all shin."

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In fact, Phil from his infancy had an uncommon attachment to these animals, and by a mind naturally shrewd and observing, made himself as intimately acquainted with their habits and instincts, and the best modes of managing them, as ever the celebrated "Cahir na Cappul"[1] did with those of the horse. Before he was fifteen he could drive the most vicious and obstinate pig as quietly before him as a lamb; yet no one knew how nor by what means he had gained the secret that enabled him to do it. Whenever he attended a fair, his time was principally spent among the pigs, where he stood handling and examining, and pretending to buy them, although he seldom had half-a-crown in his pocket. At length, by hoarding up such small sums as he could possibly lay his hands on, he got together the price of a "slip," which he bought, reared, and educated in a manner that did his ingenuity great credit. When this was brought to its *ne plus ultra* of fatness he sold it, and purchased two more, which he fed in the same way. On disposing of these, he made a fresh purchase, and thus proceeded, until, in the course of a few years, he was a well-known pig-jobber.

Phil's journeys as a pig-driver to the leading seaport town nearest him were always particularly profitable. In Ireland swine are not kept in sties, as they are among English feeders, but permitted to go at liberty through pasture-fields, commons, and along roadsides, where they make up as well as they can for the scanty pittance allowed them at home during meal-times. We do not, however, impeach Phil's honesty; but simply content ourselves with saying that when his journey was accomplished he mostly found the original number with which he had set out increased by three or four, and sometimes by half a dozen. Pigs in general resemble each other, and it surely was not Phil's fault if a stray one, feeding on the roadside or common, thought proper to join his flock and see the world. Phil's object, we presume, was only to take care that his original number was not diminished—its increase being a matter in which he felt little concern.

He now determined to take a professional trip to England,

[1] A notable horsebreaker in the South of Ireland, known as Cahir na Cappul (Cahir of the Horse). His real name was James Sullivan, and there are many traditions concerning him.—ED.

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and that this might be the more productive, he resolved to purchase a drove of the animals we have been describing. No time was lost in this speculation. The pigs were bought up as cheaply as possible, and Phil set out, for the first time in his life, to try with what success he could measure his skill against that of a Yorkshireman. On this occasion he brought with him a pet, which he had with considerable pains trained up for purposes hereafter to be explained.

There was nothing remarkable in the passage, unless that every creature on board was sea-sick, except the pigs. Even to them, however, the change was a disagreeable one; for to be pent up in the hold of a ship was a deprivation of liberty which, fresh as they were from their native hills, they could not relish. They felt, therefore, as patriots, a loss of freedom, but not a whit of appetite; for, in truth, of the latter no possible vicissitude short of death could deprive them.

Phil, however, with an assumed air of simplicity absolutely stupid, disposed of them to a Yorkshire dealer at about twice the value they would have brought in Ireland; though, as pigs went in England, it was low enough. He declared that they had been fed on tip-top feeding; which was literally true, as he afterwards admitted that the tops of nettles and potato-stalks constituted the only nourishment they had got for three weeks before.

The next morning Hodge repaired to the sties to see how they were thriving; when, to his great consternation, he found the feeding-troughs clean as if they had been washed, and not a single Irish pig to be seen or heard about the premises; but to what retreat the animals could have betaken themselves was completely beyond his comprehension. He scratched his head, and looked about him in much perplexity.

"Dang un!" he exclaimed, "I never seed nout like this."

He would have proceeded in a strain of cogitation equally enlightened, had not a noise of shouting, alarm, and confusion in the neighbourhood excited his attention. He looked about him, and to his utter astonishment saw that some extraordinary commotion prevailed, that the country was up, and the hills alive with people, who ran, and shouted, and wheeled at full flight in all possible directions. His

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first object was to join the crowd, which he did as soon as possible, and found that the pigs he had shut up the preceding night in sties, whose enclosures were at least four feet high, had cleared them like so many chamois, and were now closely pursued by the neighbours, who rose *en masse* to hunt down and secure such dreadful depredators.

The waste and mischief they had committed in one night were absolutely astonishing. Bean and turnip fields, and vegetable enclosures of all descriptions, kitchen-gardens, corn-fields, and even flower-gardens, were rooted up and destroyed with an appearance of system which would have done credit to "Terry Alt" [1] himself.

Their speed was the theme of every tongue. Hedges were taken in their flight, and cleared in a style that occasioned the country people to turn up their eyes and scratch their thick, incomprehensive heads in wonder. Dogs of all degrees bit the dust, and were caught up dead in stupid amazement by their owners, who began to doubt whether or not these extraordinary animals were swine at all. The depredators in the meantime had adopted the Horatian style of battle. Whenever there was an ungenerous advantage taken in the pursuit by slipping dogs across or before their path, they shot off at a tangent through the next crowd, many of whom they prostrated in their flight; by this means they escaped the dogs until the latter were somewhat exhausted, when, on finding one in advance of the rest, they turned, and, with standing bristles and burning tusks, fatally checked their pursuer in his full career. To wheel and fly until another got in advance was then the plan of fight; but, in fact, the conflict was conducted on the part of the Irish pigs with a fertility of expediency that did credit to their country, and established for those who displayed it the possession of intellect far superior to that of their opponents. The pigs now began to direct their course towards the sties in which they had been so well fed the night before. This being their last flight, they radiated towards one common centre with a fierceness and celerity that occasioned the

[1] A wild outlaw. The hordes of depredators who used to go about the country were known as Terry Alts.—ED.

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women and children to take shelter within doors. On arriving at the sties, the ease with which they shot themselves over the four-feet walls was incredible. The farmer had caught the alarm, and just came out in time to witness their return; he stood with his hands driven down into the pockets of his red, capacious waistcoat, and uttered not a word. When the last of them came bounding into the sty, Hodge approached, quite breathless and exhausted.

"Oh, measter," he exclaimed, "these be not Hirish pigs at oll, they be Hirish deevils; and you mun ha' bought 'em fra a cunning mon!"

"Hodge," replied his master, "I'se be bit — I'se heard feather talk about un. That breed's true Hirish; but I'se try and sell 'em to Squoire Jolly to hunt wi' as beagles, for he wants a pack. They do say all the swoine that the deevils were put into ha' been drawned; but for my peart, I'se sure that some on un must ha' escaped to Hireland."

Phil, during the commotion excited by his knavery in Yorkshire, was traversing the country in order to dispose of his remaining pig; and the manner in which he effected his first sale of it was as follows :—

A gentleman was one evening standing with some labourers by the wayside, when a tattered Irishman approached, equipped in a pair of white dusty brogues, stockings without feet, old patched breeches, a bag slung across his shoulder, his coarse shirt lying open about a neck tanned by the sun into a reddish yellow, a hat nearly the colour of the shoes, and a hay-rope tied for comfort about his waist; in one hand he also held a straw-rope that depended from the hind leg of a pig which he drove before him; in the other was a cudgel, by the assistance of which he contrived to limp on after it, his two shoulder-blades rising and falling alternately with a shrugging motion that indicated great fatigue.

When he came opposite where the gentleman stood he checked the pig, which instinctively commenced feeding upon the grass by the edge of the road.

"Och," said he, wiping his brow with the cuff of his coat, "*mavrone orth amuck*, but I'm kilt wit you. *Musha*, Gad bless yer haner, an' maybe ye'd buy a slip of a pig fwhrom me, that has my heart bruck, so she has, if ever anybody's

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heart was bruck wit the likes of her; an', sure, so there was, no doubt, or I wouldn't be as I am wit her. I'll give her a dead bargain, sir; for it's only to get her aff av my hands I'm wantin', plase yer haner—*husth, amuck—husth, a veehonee!* —Be asy, an' me in conwersation wit his haner here!"

"You are an Irishman?" the gentleman inquired.

"I am, sir, from Cannaught, yer haner, an' 'ill sell the crathur dag chape, all out.—Asy, you thief!"

"I don't want the pig, my good fellow," replied the Englishman, without evincing curiosity enough to inquire how he came to have such a commodity for sale.

"She'd be the darlint in no time wit you, sir; the run o' your kitchen ud make her up a beauty, your haner, along wit no throuble to the sarwints about sweepin' it, or anything. You'd only have to lay down the *scrahag* on the flure, or the misthress, Gad bless her, could do it, an' not lave a crumblin' behind her, besides sleepin', yer haner, in the carner beyant, if she'd take the throuble."

The sluggish phlegm of the Englishman was stirred up a little by the twisted and somewhat incomprehensible nature of these instructions.

"How far do you intend to proceed to-night, Paddy?" said he.

"The sarra one o' myself knows, plase yer haner. Sure, we've an ould sayin' of our own in Ireland beyant—that he's a wise man can tell how far he'll go, sir, till he comes to his journey's ind. I'll give this crathur to you at more nor her value, yer haner."

"More!—why the man knows not what he's saying," observed the gentleman. "Less you mean, I suppose, Paddy?"

"More or less, sir, you'll get her a bargain; an' Gad bless you, sir!"

"But it is a commodity which I don't want at present. I am very well stocked with pigs as it is. Try elsewhere."

"She'd flog the counthry-side, sir; an' if the misthress herself, sir, ud shake the wishp o' sthraw fwhor her in the kitchen, sir, near the fwhoire. Yer haner could spake to her about it—an' in no time put a knife in her whin ye plased. In regard o' the other thing, sir—she's like a Christyeen, yer haner, an' no throuble, sir, if you'd be seein' company or anything."

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"It's an extraordinary pig this of yours."

"It's no lie fwhor you, sir; she's so clane an' dacent a crathur, sir! Och, if the same pig ud come into the care o' the misthress, Gad bliss her!—an' I'm sure if she has as much gudness in her face as the hanerable *dinnha ousahl*—the handsome gintleman she's married upon!—you'll have her thrivin' bravely, sir, shartly, plase God, if you'll take courage. Will I dhrive her up the aveny fwhor you, sir? A good gintlewoman I'm sure, is the same misthress! Will I dhrive her up fwhor you, sir? *Stadh amuck—stadh dherim!*"

"No, no; I have no further time to lose; you may go forward."

"Thank yer haner—is it whorid toarst the house abow, sir? I wouldn't be standin' up, sir, wit you about a thrifle; an' you'll have her, sir, fwhor anything you plase beyant a pound, yer haner; an' tis throwin' her away, it is; but one can't be hard wit a rale gintleman, anyway."

"You only annoy me, man; besides, I don't want the pig; you lose time; I don't want to buy it, I repeat to you."

"Gad bliss you, sir—Gad bliss you! Maybe if I'd make up to the misthress, yer haner!—thrath, she wouldn't turn the crathur from the place, in regard that the tindherness ow the feelin' would come ower her—the rale gintlewoman, anyhow! 'Tis dag chape you have her at what I said, sir; an' Gad bliss you!"

"Do you want to compel me to purchase it whether I will or no?"

"Thrath, it's whor next to nothin' I'm givin' her to you, sir; but, sure, you can make your own price at anything beyant a pound. *Hurrish amuck—stadh! anish*—be asy, you crathur; sure, you're gettin' into good quarthers, anyhow—goin' to the hanerable English gintleman's kitchen; an' Gad knows it's a pleasure to deal wit 'em. Och, the world's differ there is betuxt thim an' our own dirty Irish *buckeens*, that ud shkin a bad *skilleen*, an' pay their debts wit the remaindher. The gateman ud let me in, yer haner, an' I'll meet you at the big house abow."

"Upon my honour, this is a good jest," said the gentleman, absolutely teased into compliance; "you are forcing me to buy that which I don't want."

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"Sure, you will, sir; you'll want more nor that yit, plase Gad, if you be spared.—Come, *amuck*—come, you crathur; faix, you're in luck, so you are—gettin' so good a place wid his haner here, that you won't know yourself shortly, plase Gad."

He immediately commenced driving his pig towards the gentleman's residence with such an air of utter simplicity as would have imposed upon any man not guided by direct inspiration. Whilst he approached the house, its proprietor arrived there by another path a few minutes before him, and addressing his lady, said—

"My dear, will you come and look at a purchase which an Irishman has absolutely compelled me to make. You had better come and see himself too, for he's the greatest simpleton of an Irishman I have ever seen."

The lady's curiosity was more easily excited than that of her husband. She not only came out, but brought with her some ladies who were on a visit, in order to hear the Irishman's brogue and to amuse themselves at his expense. Of the pig, too, it appeared she was determined to know something.

"George, my love, is the pig also from Ireland?"

"I don't know, my dear; but I should think so from its fleshless appearance. I have never seen so spare an animal of that class in this country."

"Juliana," said one of the ladies to her companion, "don't go too near him. Gracious! look at the bludgeon, or beam, or something he carries in his hand, to fight and beat the people, I suppose. Yet," she added, putting up her glass, "the man is actually not ill-looking; and though not so tall as the Irishman in Sheridan's 'Rivals,' he is well made."

"His eyes are good," said her companion—"a bright grey, and keen; and were it not that his nose is rather short and turned up, he would be human."

"George, my love," exclaimed the lady of the mansion, "he is like most Irishmen of his class that I have seen—indeed, scarcely so intelligent, for he does appear quite a simpleton; except, perhaps, a lurking kind of expression, which is a sign of their humour, I suppose. Don't you think so, my love?"

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"No, my dear; I think him a bad specimen of the Irishman. Whether it is that he talks our language but imperfectly, or that he is a stupid creature, I cannot say, but in selling the pig just now he actually told me that he would let me have it for more than it was worth."

"Oh, that was so laughable! We will speak to him, though."

The degree of estimation in which these civilised English held Phil was so low that this conversation took place within a few yards of him, precisely as if he had been an animal of an inferior species, or one of the aborigines of New Zealand.

"Pray what is your name?" inquired the matron.

"Phadhrumshagh Corfuffle, plase yer haner. My fadher carrid the same name upon him. We're av the Corfuffles av Leatherum Laghy, my lady; but my granmudher was a Dornyeen; an' my own mudher, plase yer haner, was o' the Shudhurthaghans o' Ballymadoghy, my ladyship. *Stadh anish, amuck bradagh*—be asy, can't you, an' me in conwersation wit the beauty o' the world that I'm spakin' to."

"That's the Negus language," observed one of the young ladies, who affected to be a wit and a blue-stocking: "it's Irish and English mixed."

"Thrath an' but that the handsome young lady's so purty," observed Phil, "I'd be sayin' myself that that's a quare remark upon a poor unlarned man; but Gad bless her, she is so purty, what can one say for lookin' an her!"

"The poor man, Adelaide, speaks as well as he can," replied the lady, rather reprovingly. "He is by no means so wild as one would have expected."

"Candidly speaking, much tamer than I expected," rejoined the wit. "Indeed, I meant the poor Irishman no offence."

"Where did you get the pig, friend? and how came you to have it for sale so far from home?"

"Fwhy, it isn't whor sale, my lady," replied Phil, evading the former question; "the masther here, Gad bless him an' spare him to you, ma'am!—thrath an' it's his four quarthers that knew how to pick out a wife, anyhow, whor beauty an' all hanerable whormations o' grandheur—so he did; an' well

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he desarves you, my lady—faix, it's a fine houseful o' thim you'll have, plase God—an' fwhy not? whin it's all in the coorse o' Providence, bein' both so handsome,—he gev me a pound note whor her, my ladyship, an' his own plisure aftherwards; an' I'm now watin' to be ped."

"What kind of a country is Ireland, as I understand you are an Irishman?"

"Thrath, my lady, it's like fwhat maybe you never seen—a fool's purse, ten guineas goin' out whor one that goes in."

"Upon my word, that's wit," observed the young blue-stocking.

"What is your opinion of Irishwomen?" the lady continued; "are they handsomer than the English ladies, think you?"

"Murdher, my lady," says Phil, raising his *caubeen*, and scratching his head, in pretended perplexity, with his finger and thumb, "fwhat am I to say to that, ma'am, and all of yees to the fwhore? But the sarra one av me will give it agin the darlins beyant."

"But which do you think the more handsome?"

"Thrath, I do, my lady; the Irish and English women would flog the world, an' sure it would be a burnin' shame to go to set them agin one another fwhor beauty."

"Whom do you mean by the 'darlins beyant'?" inquired the blue-stocking, attempting to pronounce the words.

"Faix, miss, who but the crathurs ower the wather, that kills us entirely, so they do."

"I cannot comprehend him," she added to the lady of the mansion.

"*Arrah*, maybe I'd make bould to take up the manners from you fwhor a while, my lady, plase yer haner?" said Phil, addressing the latter.

"I do not properly understand you," she replied; "speak plainer."

"Throth, that's fwhat they do, yer haner; they never gos about the bush wit yees—the gintlemen, ma'am, of our counthry, fwhin they do be coortin' yees; an' I want to ax, ma'am, if you plase, fwhat you think of thim, that is if ever any of them had the luck to come acrass you, my lady?"

"I have not been acquainted with many Irish gentlemen,"

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she replied; "but I hear they are men of a remarkable character."

"Faix, 'tis you may say that," replied Phil; "sowl, my lady, 'tis well for the masther here, plase yer haner, sir, that none o' them met wit the misthress before you was both marrid, or, wit riverence be it spoken, 'tis the sweet side o' the tongue they'd be layin' upon you, ma'am, an' the rough side to the masther himself, along wit a few scrapes of a pen on a slip o' paper, jist to appoint the time and place, in regard of her ladyship's purty complexion—an' who can deny that, anyway? Faix, ma'am, they've a way wit them, my counthrymin, that the ladies like well enough to thravel by. —Asy, you deludher, an' me in conwersation wit the quality."

"I am quite anxious to know how you came by the pig, Paddy?" said the wit.

"*Arrah*, miss, sure 'tisn't pigs you're thinkin' on, an' us discoorsin' about the gintlemen from Ireland, that you're all so fond ow here. Faix, miss, they're the boys that can fwoight for yees, an' ud rather be bringin' an Englishman to the sad fwhor your sakes, nor atin' bread an' butther. Fwhy, now, miss, if you were beyant wit us, the sarra ounce o' gunpowdher we'd have in no time, for love or money."

"Upon my word, I should like to see Ireland!" exclaimed the blue-stocking. "And why would the gunpowder get scarce, pray?"

"Faix, fightin' about you, miss, an' all of yees, sure; for myself sees no differ at all in your hanerable fwhormations of beauty an' grandeur, an' all high-flown admirations."

"But tell us where you got the pig, Paddy?" persisted the wit, struck naturally enough with the circumstance. "How do you come to have an Irish pig so far from home?"

"Fwhy, thin, miss, 'twas to a brodher o' my own I was bringin' it, that was livin' down the counthry here, an' fwhin I came to fwhere he lived, the sarra one o' me knew the place, in regard o' havin' forgot the name of it entirely; an' there was I wit the poor crathur an my hands, till his haner here bought it whrom me—Gad bless you, sir!"

"As I live, there's a fine Irish blunder," observed the wit; "I shall put it in my commonplace book — it will be so genuine. I declare I'm quite delighted!"

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"Well, Paddy," said the gentleman, "here's your money. There's a pound for you, and that's much more than the miserable animal is worth."

"Thrath, sir, you have the crathur at what we call in Ireland a bargain.[1] Maybe yer haner ud spit upon the money fwhor luck, sir. It's the way we do, sir, beyant."

"No, no, Paddy; take it as it is. Good heavens! what barbarous habits these Irish have in all their modes of life, and how far they are removed from anything like civilisation!"

"Thank yer haner. Faix, sir, this'll come so handy for the landlord at home, in regard o' the rint for the bit o' phatie ground, so it will, if I can get home agin widout brakin' it. *Arrah*, maybe yer haner ud give me the price o' my bed, an' a bit to ate, sir, an' keep me from brakin' in upon this, sir—Gad bless the money! I'm thinkin' o' 'the poor wife an' childher, sir—strivin', so I am, to do for the darlins."

"Poor soul," said the lady, "he is affectionate in the midst of his wretchedness and ignorance."

"Here—here," replied the Englishman, anxious to get rid of him—"there's a shilling, which I give because you appear to be attached to your family."

"Och, och, fwhat can I say, sir, only that long may you reign ower your family an' the hanerable ladies to the fwhore, sir. Gad fwhor ever bliss you, sir, but you're the kind, noble gintleman, an' all belongin' to you, sir!"

Having received the shilling, he was in the act of departing, when, after turning it deliberately in his hand, shrugging his shoulders two or three times, and scratching his head, with a vacant face he approached the lady.

"*Musha*, ma'am, an' maybe ye'd have the tindherness in your heart, seein' that the gudness is in yer hanerable face, anyway, an' it would save the *skilleen* that the masther gev'd me for payin' my passage, so it would, jist to bid the steward, my ladyship, to ardher me a bit to ate in the kitchen below. The hunger, ma'am, is hard upon me, my lady; an' fwhat I'm doin', sure, is in regard o' the wife at home, an' the childher, the crathurs, an' me far fwhrom them, in a sthrange counthry—Gad help me!"

[1] Ironically—a take in.

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"What a singular being, George! and how beautiful is the economy of domestic affection exemplified, notwithstanding his half-savage state, in the little plans he devises for the benefit of his wife and children!" exclaimed the good lady, quite unconscious that Phil was a bachelor. "Juliana, my love, desire Timmins to give him his dinner. Follow this young lady, good man, and she will order you refreshment."

"Gad's blessin' upon your beauty an' gudness, my lady; an' a man might thravel far afore he'd meet the likes o' you for aither o' them. Is it the other handsome young lady I'm to folly, ma'am?"

"Yes," replied the young wit, with an arch smile; "come after me."

"Thrath, miss, an' it's an asy task to do that, anyway; wit a heart an' half I go, *acushla;* an' I seen the day, miss, that it's not much o' mate an' dhrink ud throuble me, if I jist got lave to be lookin' at you, wit nothin' but yourself to think an. But the wife an' childher, miss, makes great changes in us entirely."

"Why, you are quite gallant, Paddy."

"Thrath, I suppose I am now, miss; but, you see, my hanerable young lady, that's our fwhailin' at home—the counthry's poor, an' we can't help it, whedher or not. We're fwhorced to it, miss, whin we come ower here, by you an' the likes o' you, *mavourneen!*"

Phil then proceeded to the house, was sent to the kitchen by the young lady, and furnished through the steward with an abundant supply of cold meat, bread, and beer, of which he contrived to make a meal that somewhat astonished the servants. Having satisfied his hunger, he deliberately, but with the greatest simplicity of countenance, filled the wallet, which he carried slung across his back, with whatever he had left, observing as he did it—

"Fwhy, thin, 'tis sthrange it is that the same custom is wit us in Ireland beyant that is here; fwhor whinever a traveller is axed in, he always brings fwhat he doesn't ate along wit him. An' sure enough it's the same here amongst yees," he added, packing up the bread and beef as he spoke; "but Gad bliss the custom, anyhow, fwhor it's a good one!"

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When he had secured the provender, and was ready to resume his journey, he began to yawn, and to exhibit the most unequivocal symptoms of fatigue.

"*Arrah,* sir," said he to the steward, "you wouldn't have e'er an ould barn that I'd throw myself in fwhor the night? The sarra leg I have to put undher me, now that I've got stiff wit the sittin' so lang.[1] That, an' a wishp o' sthraw, sir, to sleep an, an' Gad bliss you!"

"Paddy, I cannot say," replied the steward; "but I shall ask my master, and if he orders it, you shall have the comfort of a hard floor and clean straw, Paddy—that you shall."

"Many thanks to you, sir: it's in your face, in thrath, the same gudness an' ginerosity."

The gentleman, on hearing Phil's request to be permitted a sleeping place in the barn, was rather surprised at his wretched notion of comfort than at the request itself.

"Certainly, Timmins, let him sleep there," he replied; "give him sacks and straw enough. I daresay he will feel the privilege a luxury, poor devil, after his fatigue. Give him his breakfast in the morning, Timmins. Good heavens," he added, "what a singular people! What an amazing progress civilisation must make before these Irish can be brought at all near the commonest standard of humanity!"

At this moment Phil, who was determined to back the steward's request, approached them.

"Paddy," said the gentleman, anticipating him, "I have ordered you sacks and straw in the barn, and your breakfast in the morning before you set out."

"Thrath," said Phil, "if there's e'er a sthray blissin' goin', depind an it, sir, you'll get it, fwhor your hanerable ginerosity to the sthranger. But about the 'slip,' sir—if the misthress herself ud shake the wishp o' sthraw fwhor her in the far carner o' the kitchen below, an' see her gettin' her supper, the crathur, before she'd put her to bed, she'd be thrivin' like a salmon, sir, in less than no time; an' to ardher the sarwints, sir, if you plase, not to be defraudin' the crathur of the big platees. Fwhor in regard it cannot spake fwhor

[1] This is pronounced as in the first syllable of "Langolee"—not like the Scotch "lang."

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itself, sir, it frets as wise as a Christyeen when it's not honestly thrated."

"Never fear, Paddy; we shall take good care of it."

"Thank you, sir. But I aften heerd, sir, that you dunna how to feed pigs in this counthry in ardher to mix the fhat an' lane, lair (layer) about."

"And how do you manage that in Ireland, Paddy?"

"Fwhy, sir, I'll tell you how the misthress, Gad bliss her, will manage it fwhor you. Take the crathur, sir, an' feed it to-morro wtill it's as full as a tick—that's fwhor the fhat, sir; thin let her give it nothin' at all the next day, but keep it black fhastin'—that's fwhor the lane (lean). Let her stick to that, sir, keepin' it atin' one day an fastin' anodher, for six months, thin put a knife in it, an' if you don't have the fhat an' lane, lair about, beautiful all out, fwhy, niver bleeve Phadhrumshagh Corfuffle agin. Ay, indeed!"

The Englishman looked keenly at Phil, but could only read in his countenance a thorough and implicit belief in his own recipe for mixing the fat and lean. It is impossible to express his contempt for the sense and intellect of Phil; nothing could surpass it but the contempt which Phil entertained for him.

"Well," said he to the servant, "I have often heard of the barbarous habits of the Irish, but I must say that the incidents of this evening have set my mind at rest upon the subject. Good heavens! when will ever this besotted country rise in the scale of nations! Did ever a human being hear of such a method of feeding swine! I should have thought it incredible had I heard it from any but an Irishman!"

Phil then retired to the kitchen, where his assumed simplicity highly amused the servants, who, after an hour or two's fun with "Paddy," conducted him in a kind of contemptuous procession to the barn, where they left him to his repose.

The next morning he failed to appear at the hour of breakfast, but his non-appearance was attributed to his fatigue, in consequence of which he was supposed to have overslept himself. On going, however, to call him from the barn, they discovered that he had decamped; and on looking after the "slip," it was found that both had taken French leave of the

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Englishman. Phil and the pig had actually travelled fifteen miles that morning before the hour on which he was missed —Phil going at a dog's trot, and the pig following at such a respectful distance as might not appear to identify them as fellow-travellers. In this manner Phil sold the pig to upwards of two dozen intelligent English gentlemen and farmers, and after winding up his bargains successfully, both arrived in Liverpool, highly delighted by their commercial trip through England.

The passage from Liverpool to Dublin in Phil's time was far different from that which steam and British enterprise have since made it. A vessel was ready to sail for the latter place on the very day of Phil's arrival in town; and as he felt rather anxious to get out of England as soon as he could, he came, after selling his pig in good earnest, to the aforesaid vessel to ascertain if it were possible to get a deck passage. The year had then advanced to the latter part of autumn; so that it was the season when those inconceivable hordes of Irishmen who emigrate periodically for the purpose of lightening John Bull's labour were in the act of returning to that country in which they find little to welcome them—but domestic affection and misery.

When Phil arrived at the vessel, he found the captain in a state of peculiar difficulty. About twelve or fourteen gentlemen of rank and property, together with a score or upwards of highly respectable persons, but of less consideration, were in equal embarrassment. The fact was, that as no other vessel left Liverpool that day, about five hundred Irishmen, mostly reapers and mowers, had crowded upon deck, each determined to keep his place at all hazards. The captain, whose vessel was small, and none of the stoutest, flatly refused to put to sea with such a number. He told them it was madness to think of it; he could not risk the lives of the other passengers, nor even their own, by sailing with five hundred on the deck of so small a vessel. If one half would withdraw peaceably, he would carry the other half, which was as much as he could possibly accomplish. They were very willing to grant that what he said was true; but, in the meantime, not a man of them would move, and to clear out such a number of fellows, who loved nothing

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better than fighting, armed, too, with sickles and scythes, was a task beyond either his ability or inclination to execute. He remonstrated with them, entreated, raged, swore, and threatened, but all to no purpose. His threats and entreaties were received with equal good-humour. Gibes and jokes were broken on him without number, and as his passion increased, so did their mirth, until nothing could be seen but the captain in vehement gesticulation—the Irishmen huzzaing him so vociferously that his damns and curses, uttered against them, could not reach even his own ears.

"Gentlemen," said he to his cabin passengers, "for the love of Heaven, tax your invention to discover some means whereby to get one-half of these men out of the vessel, otherwise it will be impossible that we can sail to-day. I have already proffered to take one-half of them by lot, but they will not hear of it; and how to manage, I am sure I don't know."

The matter, however, was beyond their depth: the thing seemed utterly impracticable, and the chances of their putting to sea were becoming fainter and fainter.

"Bl—t their eyes!" he at length exclaimed, "the ragged, hungry devils! If they heard me with decency, I could bear their obstinacy better; but no, they must turn me into ridicule, and break their jests and turn their cursed barbarous grins upon me in my own vessel. I say, boys," he added, proceeding to address them once more—"I say, savages, I have just three observations to make. The first is——"

"*Arrah*, captain, *avourneen*, hadn't you betther get upon a stool," said a voice, "an' put a text before it, thin divide it dacently into three halves, an' make a sarmon of it."

"Captain, you wor intinded for the Church," added another. "You're the moral[1] of a Methodist preacher, if you wor dressed in black."

"Let him alone," said a third; "he'd be a jinteel man enough in a wilderness, an' ud make an illigant dancin'-masther to the bears."

"He's as graceful as a shaved pig on its hind legs, dancin' the 'Baltihorum jig.'"

[1] Model.

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The captain's face was literally black with passion. He turned away with a curse, which produced another huzza, and swore that he would rather encounter the Bay of Biscay in a storm than have anything to do with such an unmanageable mob.

"Captain," said a little shrewd-looking Connaught man, "what ud you be willin' to give anybody, over an' abow his free passage, that ud tell you how to get one-half o' them out?"

"I'll give him a crown," replied the captain, "together with grog and rations to the eyes: I'll be hanged if I don't."

"Then I'll do it fwhor you, sir, if you keep your word wit me."

"Done," said the captain; "it's a bargain, my good fellow, if you accomplish it; and what's more, I'll consider you a knowing one."

"I'm a poor Connaught man, your haner," replied our friend Phil, "but what's to prevint me thryin'! Tell thim," he continued, "that you must go; purtind to be fwhor takin' thim wit you, sir. Put Munshther agin Connaught, one-half an this side, an' the odher an that, to keep the crathur of a ship steady, your haner; an' fwhin you have thim half an' half, wit a little room betuxt thim, 'Now,' says your haner, 'boys, you're divided into two halves; if one side kicks the other out o' the ship, I'll bring the cunquirors."

The captain said not a word in reply to Phil, but immediately ranged the Munster and Connaught men on each side of the deck—a matter which he found little difficulty in accomplishing; for each party, hoping that he intended to take themselves, readily declared their province, and stood together. When they were properly separated, there still remained about forty or fifty persons belonging to neither province; but, at Phil's suggestion, the captain paired them off to each division, man for man, until they were drawn up into two bodies.

"Now," said he, "there you stand; let one-half of you drub the other out of the vessel, and the conquerors shall get their passage."

Instant was the struggle that ensued for the sake of securing a passage, and from the anxiety to save a shilling by getting

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out of Liverpool on that day. Another night, and probably another day, in Liverpool would have been attended with expense. This argument prevailed with all—with Munster as well as with Connaught—and they fought accordingly.

When the attack first commenced each party hoped to be able to expel the other without blows. This plan was soon abandoned. In a few minutes the sticks and fists were busy. Throttling, tugging, cuffing, and knocking down, shouting, hallooing, huzzaing, and yelling gave evident proofs that the captain, in embracing Phil's proposal, had unwittingly applied the match to a mine whose explosion was likely to be attended with disastrous consequences. As the fight became warm, and the struggles more desperate, the hooks and scythes were resorted to; blood began to flow, and men to fall, disabled and apparently dying. The immense crowd which had now assembled to witness the fight among the Irishmen could not stand tamely by and see so many lives likely to be lost, without calling in the civil authorities. A number of constables in a few minutes attended; but these worthy officers of the civil authorities experienced very uncivil treatment from the fists, cudgels, and sickles of *both* parties. In fact, they were obliged to get from among the rioters with all possible celerity, and to suggest to the magistrates the necessity of calling in the military.

In the meantime the battle rose into a furious and bitter struggle for victory. The deck of the vessel was actually slippery with blood, and many were lying in an almost lifeless state. Several were pitched into the hold, and had their legs and arms broken by the fall; some were tossed over the sides of the vessel, and only saved from drowning by the activity of the sailors; and not a few of those who had been knocked down in the beginning of the fray were trampled into insensibility.

The Munster men at length gave way; and their opponents, following up their advantage, succeeded in driving them to a man out of the vessel just as the military arrived. Fortunately their interference was unnecessary. The captain's object was accomplished; and as no lives were lost, nor any injury more serious than broken bones and flesh-wounds sustained, he got the vessel in readiness, and put to sea.

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Who would not think that the Irish were a nation of misers when our readers are informed that all this bloodshed arose from their unwillingness to lose a shilling by remaining in Liverpool another night? Or who could believe that these very men, on reaching home, and meeting their friends in a fair or market, or in a public-house after mass on a Sunday, would sit down and spend, recklessly and foolishly, that very money which in another country they part with as if it were their very heart's blood? Yet so it is! Unfortunate Paddy is wiser anywhere than at home, where wisdom, sobriety, and industry are best calculated to promote his own interests.

This slight sketch of Phil Purcel we have presented to our readers as a specimen of the low, cunning Connaught man; and we have only to add that neither the pig-selling scene, nor the battle on the deck of the vessel in Liverpool, is fictitious. On the contrary, we have purposely kept the tone of our description of the latter circumstance beneath the reality. Phil, however, is not drawn as a general portrait, but as one of that knavish class of men called "jobbers," a description of swindlers certainly not more common in Ireland than in any other country. We have known Connaught men as honest and honourable as it was possible to be; yet there is a strong prejudice entertained against them in every other province of Ireland, as is evident by the old adage, "Never trust a Connaught man."

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THE LIANHAN SHEE

AN IRISH SUPERSTITION

ONE summer evening Mary Sullivan was sitting at her own well-swept hearthstone, knitting feet to a pair of sheep's-grey stockings, for Bartley, her husband. It was one of those serene evenings in the month of June, when the decline of day assumes a calmness and repose resembling what we might suppose to have irradiated Eden when our first parents sat in it before their fall. The beams of the sun shone through the windows in clear shafts of amber light, exhibiting millions of those atoms which float to the naked eye within its mild radiance. The dog lay barking in his dream at her feet, and the grey cat sat purring placidly upon his back, from which even his occasional agitation did not dislodge her.

Mrs. Sullivan was the wife of a wealthy farmer, and niece to the Rev. Felix O'Rourke; her kitchen was consequently large, comfortable, and warm. Over where she sat jutted out the "brace," well lined with bacon; to the right hung a well-scoured salt-box; and to the left was the jamb, with its little Gothic paneless window to admit the light. Within it hung several ash rungs, seasoning for flail-sooples, a dozen of eel-skins and several stripes of horse-skin, as hangings for them. The dresser was a "parfit white," and well furnished with the usual appurtenances. Over the door and on the "threshel" were nailed, "for luck," two horse-shoes that had been found by accident. In a little "hole" in the wall, beneath the salt-box, lay a great bottle of holy water to keep the place purified; and against the copestone of the gable, on the outside, grew a large lump of house-leek, as a specific for sore eyes.

In the corner of the garden were a few stalks of tansy, "to kill the thievin' worms in the childher, the crathurs," together

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with a little Rosenoble, Solomon's Seal, and Bugloss, each for some medicinal purpose. The "lime wather" Mrs. Sullivan could make herself, and the "bog bane" for the *linh roe*, or heart-burn, grew in their own meadow-drain; so that, in fact, she had within her reach a very decent pharmacopœia, perhaps as harmless as that of the profession itself. Lying on the top of the salt-box was a bunch of fairy flax, and sewed in the folds of her own scapular was the dust of what had once been a four-leafed shamrock, an invaluable specific "for seein' the good people," if they happened to come within the bounds of vision. Over the door in the inside, over the beds, and over the cattle in the outhouses, were placed branches of withered palm that had been consecrated by the priest on Palm Sunday; and when the cows happened to calve, this good woman tied, with her own hands, a woollen thread about their tails, to prevent them from being overlooked by evil eyes, or elf-shot by the fairies, who seem to possess a peculiar power over females of every species during the season of parturition. It is unnecessary to mention the variety of charms which she possessed for that obsolete malady the colic, for toothaches, headaches, or for removing warts, and taking motes out of the eyes; let it suffice to inform our readers that she was well stocked with them; and that, in addition to this, she, together with her husband, drank a potion made up and administered by a herb-doctor, for preventing for ever the slightest misunderstanding or quarrel between man and wife. Whether it produced this desirable object or not our readers may conjecture, when we add that the herb-doctor, after having taken a very liberal advantage of their generosity, was immediately compelled to disappear from the neighbourhood, in order to avoid meeting with Bartley, who had a sharp look-out for him, not exactly on his own account, but "in regard," he said, "that it had no effect upon Mary at all, at all;" whilst Mary, on the other hand, admitted its efficacy upon herself, but maintained "that Bartley was worse nor ever afther it."

Such was Mary Sullivan as she sat at her own hearth, quite alone, engaged as we have represented her. What she may have been meditating on we cannot pretend to ascertain; but after some time she looked sharply into the "backstone," or

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hob, with an air of anxiety and alarm. By-and-by she suspended her knitting, and listened with much earnestness, leaning her right ear over to the hob, from whence the sounds to which she paid such deep attention proceeded. At length she crossed herself devoutly, and exclaimed, "Queen of saints about us!—is it back yees are? Well, sure there's no use in talkin', bekase they say you know what's said of you or to you—an' we may as well spake yees fair. Hem—*musha*, yees are welcome back, crickets, *avourneenee!* I hope that, not like the last visit ye ped us, yees are comin' for luck now! *Moolyeen* died, anyway, soon afther your other *kailyee*, ye crathurs ye. Here's the bread, an' the salt, an' the male for yees, an' we wish yees well. Eh?—saints above, if it isn't listenin' they are, jist like a Christhen! *Wurrah*, but yees are the wise an' the quare crathurs all out."

She then shook a little holy water over the hob, and muttered to herself an Irish charm or prayer against the evils which crickets are often supposed by the peasantry to bring with them, and requested, still in the words of the charm, that their presence might on that occasion rather be a presage of good fortune to man and beast belonging to her.

"There now, ye *dhonhans* ye; sure, ye can't say that ye're ill thrated here, anyhow, or ever was mocked or made game of in the same family. You have got your hansel, an' full an' plenty of it—hopin', at the same time, that you'll have no rason in life to cut our best clothes from rivinge. Sure an' I didn't desarve to have my brave stuff long body[1] cut an' riddled the way it was the last time yees wor here, an' only bekase little Barny, that has but the sinse of a *gorsoon*, tould yees in a joke to pack off wid yourselves somewhere else. *Musha*, never heed what the likes of him says; sure, he's but a *caudy*, that doesn't mane ill, only the bit o' divarsion, wid yees."

She then resumed her knitting, occasionally stopping, as she changed her needles, to listen with her ear set, as if she wished to augur, from the nature of their chirping, whether they came for good or evil.[2] This, however, seemed to be

[1] An old-fashioned Irish gown.

[2] This was a superstitious observance among some of the peasantry, who also listened to the chirping of the cricket for the same reason.

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beyond her faculty of translating their language; for after sagely shaking her head two or three times, she knit more busily than before.

At this moment the shadow of a person passing the house darkened the window opposite which she sat, and immediately a tall female, of a wild dress and aspect, entered the kitchen.

"*Gho manhy dhea ghud, a ban choir!* the blessin' o' goodness upon you, dacent woman," said Mrs. Sullivan, addressing her in those kindly phrases so peculiar to the Irish language.

Instead of making her any reply, however, the woman, whose eye glistened with a wild depth of meaning, exclaimed in low tones, apparently of much anguish "*Husht, husht, dherum!* husht, husht, I say—let me alone—I will do it—will you husht? I will, I say—I will—there now—that's it—be quiet, an' I will do it—be quiet!" and as she thus spoke, she turned her face back over her left shoulder, as if some invisible being dogged her steps and stood bending over her.

"*Gho manhy dhea ghud, a ban choir, dherum areesht!* the blessin' o' God on you, honest woman, I say again," said Mrs. Sullivan, repeating that sacred form of salutation with which the peasantry address each other. "'Tis a fine evenin', honest woman—glory be to Him that sent the same, and amin! If it was cowld, I'd be axin' you to draw your chair into the fire; but, anyway, won't you sit down?"

As she ceased speaking, the piercing eye of the strange woman became riveted on her with a glare which, whilst it startled Mrs. Sullivan, seemed full of an agony that almost abstracted her from external life. It was not, however, so wholly absorbing as to prevent it from expressing a marked interest, whether for good or evil, in the woman who addressed her so hospitably.

"Husht, now—husht," she said, as if aside—"husht, won't you—sure, I may speak the thing to her—you said it—there now, husht!" And then fastening her dark eyes on Mrs. Sullivan, she smiled bitterly and mysteriously.

"I know you well," she said, without, however, returning the blessing contained in the usual reply to Mrs Sullivan's

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salutation—"I know you well, Mary Sullivan—husht, now, husht—yes, I know you well, and the power of all that you carry about you; but you'd be better than you are—and that's well enough now—if you had sense to know. Ah, ah, ah!—what's this!" she exclaimed abruptly, with three distinct shrieks, that seemed to be produced by sensations of sharp and piercing agony.

"In the name of goodness, what's over you, honest woman?" inquired Mrs. Sullivan, as she started from her chair, and ran to her in a state of alarm bordering on terror. "Is it sick you are?"

The woman's face had got haggard, and its features distorted; but in a few minutes they resumed their peculiar expression of settled wildness and mystery. "Sick!" she replied, licking her parched lips—"*avouh, avouh*—look! look!" and she pointed, with a shudder that almost convulsed her whole frame, to a lump that rose on her shoulders. This, be it what it might, was covered with a red cloak, closely pinned and tied with great caution about her body. "'Tis here!—I have it!"

"Blessed Mother!" exclaimed Mrs. Sullivan, tottering over to her chair, as finished a picture of horror as the eye could witness—"this day's Friday; the saints stand betwixt me an' all harm! Oh, holy Mary, protect me! *Nhanim an airh,*" and she forthwith proceeded to bless herself, which she did thirteen times in honour of the blessed Virgin and the twelve Apostles.

"Ay, it's as you see!" replied the stranger bitterly. "It is here—husht, now—husht, I say—I will say the thing to her, mayn't I? Ay, indeed, Mary Sullivan, 'tis with me always—always. Well, well, no, I won't, I won't—easy—oh, blessed saints, easy, and I won't!"

In the meantime Mrs. Sullivan had uncorked her bottle of holy water, and plentifully bedewed herself with it, as a preservative against this mysterious woman and her dreadful secret.

"Blessed Mother above!" she ejaculated, "the *Lianhan Shee!*" and as she spoke, with the holy water in the palm of her hand, she advanced cautiously, and with great terror, to throw it upon the stranger and the unearthly thing she bore.

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"Don't attempt it!" shouted the other, in tones of mingled fierceness and terror; "do you want to give me pain without keeping yourself anything at all safer? Don't you know it doesn't care about your holy water? But I'd suffer for it, an' perhaps so would you."

Mrs. Sullivan, terrified by the agitated looks of the woman, drew back with affright, and threw the holy water with which she intended to purify the other on her own person.

"Why, thin, you lost crathur, who or what are you at all? —don't, don't—for the sake of all the saints and angels of heaven, don't come next or near me—keep your distance —but what are you, or how did you come to get that 'good thing' you carry about wid you?"

"Ay, indeed!" replied the woman bitterly, "as if I would or could tell you that! I say, you woman, you're doing what's not right in asking me a question you ought not let cross your lips. Look to yourself, and what's over you."

The simple woman, thinking her meaning literal, almost leaped off her seat with terror, and turned up her eyes to ascertain whether or not any dreadful appearance had approached her, or hung over her where she sat.

"Woman," said she, "I spoke you kind an' fair, an' I wish you well—but——"

"But what?" replied the other; and her eyes kindled into deep and profound excitement, apparently upon very slight grounds.

"Why—hem—nothin' at all, sure, only——"

"Only what?" asked the stranger, with a face of anguish that seemed to torture every feature out of its proper lineaments.

"Dacent woman," said Mrs. Sullivan, whilst the hair began to stand with terror upon her head, "sure, it's no wondher in life that I'm in a perplexity, whin the *Lianhan Shee* is undher the one roof wid me. 'Tisn't that I want to know anything at all about it—the dear forbid I should; but I never hard of a person bein' tormented wid it as you are. I always used to hear the people say that it thrated its friends well."

"Husht!" said the woman, looking wildly over her shoulder, "I'll not tell; it's on myself I'll leave the blame!

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Why, will you never pity me? Am I to be night and day tormented? Oh, you're wicked and cruel for no reason!"

"Thry," said Mrs. Sullivan, "an' bless yourself—call on God."

"Ah!" shouted the other, "are you going to get me killed?" and as she uttered the words a spasmodic working which must have occasioned great pain, even to torture, became audible in her throat; her bosom heaved up and down; and her head was bent repeatedly on her breast, as if by force.

"Don't mention that name," said she, "in my presence, except you mean to drive me to utter distraction. I mean," she continued, after considerable effort to recover her former tone and manner—"hear me with attention—I mean, woman—you, Mary Sullivan—that if you mention that holy name, you might as well keep plunging sharp knives into my heart! Husht! peace to me for one minute, tormentor! Spare me something; I'm in your power!"

"Will you ate anything?" said Mrs. Sullivan; "poor crathur, you look like hunger an' distress; there's enough in the house, blessed be them that sent it! an' you had betther thry an' take some nourishment, anyway," and she raised her eyes in a silent prayer of relief and ease for the unhappy woman, whose unhallowed associations had, in her opinion, sealed her doom.

"Will I?—will I?—oh!" she replied, "may you never know misery for offering it! Oh, bring me something—some refreshment—some food—for I'm dying with hunger."

Mrs. Sullivan, who, with all her superstition, was remarkable for charity and benevolence, immediately placed food and drink before her, which the stranger absolutely devoured—taking care occasionally to secrete under the protuberance which appeared behind her neck a portion of what she ate. This, however, she did not by stealth, but openly; merely taking means to prevent the concealed thing from being by any possible accident discovered.

When the craving of hunger was satisfied, she appeared to suffer less from the persecution of her tormentor than before; whether it was, as Mrs. Sullivan thought, that the food with which she plied it appeased in some degree its

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irritability, or lessened that of the stranger, it was difficult to say; at all events, she became more composed; her eyes resumed somewhat of a natural expression; each sharp ferocious glare which shot from them with such intense and rapid flashes, partially disappeared; her knit brows dilated, and part of a forehead which had once been capacious and handsome lost the contractions which deformed it by deep wrinkles. Altogether the change was evident, and very much relieved Mrs. Sullivan, who could not avoid observing it.

"It's not that I care much about it, if you'd think it not right o' me, but it's odd enough for you to keep the lower part of your face muffled up in that black cloth; an' then your forehead, too, is covered down on your face a bit. If they're part of the bargain"—and she shuddered at the thought—"between you an' anything that's not good—hem! —I think you'd do well to throw thim off o' you, an' turn to thim that can protect you from everything that's bad. Now, a scapular would keep all the divils in hell from one; an' if you'd——"

On looking at the stranger she hesitated, for the wild expression of her eyes began to return.

"Don't begin my punishment again," replied the woman; "make no allus——don't make mention in my presence of anything that's good. Husht—husht—it's beginning—easy now—easy! No," said she, "I came to tell you that only for my breaking a vow I made to this thing upon me, I'd be happy instead of miserable with it. I say, it's a good thing to have, if the person will use this bottle," she added, producing one, "as I will direct them."

"I wouldn't wish, for my part," replied Mrs. Sullivan, "to have anything to do wid it—neither act nor part;" and she crossed herself devoutly on contemplating such an unholy alliance as that at which her companion hinted.

"Mary Sullivan," replied the other, "I can put good fortune and happiness in the way of you and yours. It is for you the good is intended: if you don't get both, no other can;" and her eyes kindled as she spoke, like those of the Pythoness in the moment of inspiration.

Mrs. Sullivan looked at her with awe, fear, and a strong

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mixture of curiosity; she had often heard that the *Lianhan Shee* had, through means of the person to whom it was bound, conferred wealth upon several, although it could never render this important service to those who exercised direct authority over it. She therefore experienced something like a conflict between her fears and a love of that wealth the possession of which was so plainly intimated to her.

"The money," said she, "would be one thing, but to have the *Lianhan Shee* planted over a body's shouldher—och! the saints preserve us!—why, if it could be managed widout havin' act or part wid that thing, people would do anything in rason an' fairity."

"You have this day been kind to me," replied the woman, "and that's what I can't say of many—dear help me!—husht! Every door is shut in my face! Does not every cheek get pale when I am seen? If I meet a fellow-creature on the road, they turn into the field to avoid me; if I ask for food, it's to a deaf ear I speak; if I am thirsty, they send me to the river. What house would shelter me? In cold, in hunger, in *dhruth*, in storm, and in tempest, I am alone and unfriended, hated, feared, an' avoided; starving in the winter's cold, and burning in the summer's heat. All this is my fate here; and—oh! oh! oh!—have mercy, tormentor—have mercy! I will not lift my thoughts there—I'll keep the paction—but spare me now!"

She turned round as she spoke, seeming to follow an invisible object, or perhaps attempting to get a more complete view of the mysterious being which exercised such a terrible and painful influence over her. Mrs. Sullivan also kept her eye fixed upon the lump, and actually believed that she saw it move. Fear of incurring the displeasure of what it contained, and a superstitious reluctance harshly to thrust a person from her door who had eaten of her food, prevented her from desiring the woman to depart.

"In the name of goodness," she replied, "I will have nothing to do wid your gift. Providence, blessed be His name, has done well for me an' mine, and it mightn't be right to go beyant what it has pleased Him to give me."

"A rational sentiment—I mean there's good sense in what you say," answered the stranger; "but you need not

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be afraid," and she accompanied the expression by holding up the bottle and kneeling. . "Now," she added, "listen to me, and judge for yourself if what I say, when I swear it, can be a lie." She then proceeded to utter oaths of the most solemn nature, the purport of which was to assure Mrs. Sullivan that drinking of the bottle would be attended with no danger.

"You see this little bottle—drink it. Oh, for my sake and your own, drink it; it will give wealth without end to you and to all belonging to you. Take one-half of it before sunrise, and the other half when he goes down. You must stand while drinking it, with your face to the east in the morning, and at night to the west. Will you promise to do this?"

"How would drinkin' the bottle get me money?" inquired Mrs. Sullivan, who certainly felt a strong tendency of heart to the wealth.

"That I can't tell now, nor would you understand it even if I could; but you will know all when what I say is complied with."

"Keep your bottle, dacent woman. I wash my hands out of it. The saints above guard me from the timptation! I'm sure it's not right; for, as I'm a sinner, 'tis gettin' stronger every minute widin me! Keep it. I'm loth to bid any one that ett o' my bread to go from my hearth, but if you go, I'll make it worth your while. Saints above, what's comin' over me! In my whole life I never had such a hankerin' afther money! Well, well, but it's quare entirely!"

"Will you drink it?" asked her companion. "If it does hurt or harm to you or yours, or anything but good, may what is hanging over me be fulfilled!" and she extended a thin but not ungraceful arm, in the act of holding out the bottle to her kind entertainer.

"For the sake of all that's good and gracious, take it without scruple—it is not hurtful; a child might drink every drop that's in it. Oh, for the sake of all you love, and of all that love you, take it!" and as she urged her, the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"No, no," replied Mrs. Sullivan, "it'll never cross my lips

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—not if it made me as rich as ould Henderson, that airs his guineas in the sun, for fraid they'd get light by lyin' past."

"I entreat you to take it!" said the strange woman.

"Never, never!—once for all—I say I won't; so spare your breath."

The firmness of the good housewife was not, in fact, to be shaken; so after exhausting all the motives and arguments with which she could urge the accomplishment of her design, the strange woman, having again put the bottle into her bosom, prepared to depart.

She had now once more become calm, and resumed her seat with the languid air of one who has suffered much exhaustion and excitement. She put her hand upon her forehead for a few moments, as if collecting her faculties, or endeavouring to remember the purport of their previous conversation. A slight moisture had broken through her skin, and altogether, notwithstanding her avowed criminality in entering into an unholy bond, she appeared an object of deep compassion.

In a moment her manner changed again, and her eyes blazed out once more, as she asked her alarmed hostess—

"Again, Mary Sullivan, will you take the gift that I have it in my power to give you?—ay or no? Speak, poor mortal, if you know what is for your own good!"

Mrs. Sullivan's fears, however, had overcome her love of money, particularly as she thought that wealth obtained in such a manner could not prosper; her only objection being to the means of acquiring it.

"Oh!" said the stranger, "am I doomed never to meet with any one who will take the promise off me by drinking of this bottle? Oh! but I am unhappy! What it is to fear —ah! ah!—and keep His commandments. Had I done so in my youthful time, I wouldn't now—ah—merciful Mother, is there no relief?—kill me, tormentor—kill me outright, for surely the pangs of hereafter cannot be greater than those you now make me suffer. Woman," said she, and her muscles stood out in extraordinary energy—"woman, Mary Sullivan —ay, if you should kill me—blast me—where I stand, I will say the word—woman—you have daughters—teach them—to fear——" Having got so far, she stopped; her bosom heaved up and down, her frame shook dreadfully, her eye-

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balls became lurid and fiery, her hands were clenched, and the spasmodic throes of inward convulsion worked the white froth up to her mouth. At length she suddenly became like a statue, with this wild, supernatural expression intense upon her, and with an awful calmness, by far more dreadful than excitement could be, concluded by pronouncing, in deep, husky tones, the name of God.

Having accomplished this with such a powerful struggle, she turned round, with pale despair in her countenance and manner, and with streaming eyes slowly departed, leaving Mrs. Sullivan in a situation not at all to be envied.

In a short time the other members of the family, who had been out at their evening employments, returned. Bartley, her husband, having entered somewhat sooner than his three daughters from milking, was the first to come in; presently the girls followed; and in a few minutes they sat down to supper, together with the servants, who dropped in one by one, after the toil of the day. On placing themselves about the table, Bartley, as usual, took his seat at the head; but Mrs. Sullivan, instead of occupying hers, sat at the fire in a state of uncommon agitation. Every two or three minutes she would cross herself devoutly, and mutter such prayers against spiritual influences of an evil nature as she could compose herself to remember.

"Thin, why don't you come to your supper, Mary," said the husband, "while the *sowans* are warm? Brave and thick they are this night, anyway."

His wife was silent; for so strong a hold had the strange woman and her appalling secret upon her mind, that it was not till he repeated his question three or four times—raising his head with surprise, and asking, "Eh, thin, Mary, what's come over you—is it unwell you are?"—that she noticed what he said.

"Supper!" she exclaimed—"unwell! 'tis a good right I'd have to be unwell, even if I was, which I am not—that is to say, unwell—but I'm all through other—I hope nothin' bad will happen, anyway. Feel my face, Nannie," she added, addressing one of her daughters; "it's as cowld an' wet as a limestone—ay, an' if you found me a corpse before you, it wouldn't be at all strange."

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There was a general pause at the seriousness of this intimation. The husband rose from his supper, and went up to the hearth where she sat.

"Turn round to the light," said he. "Why, Mary dear, in the name of wondher, what ails you? for you're like a corpse, sure enough. Can't you tell us what has happened, or what put you in such a state? Why, childher, the cowld sweat's teemin' off her!"

The poor woman, unable to sustain the shock produced by her interview with the stranger, found herself getting more weak, and requested a drink of water; but before it could be put to her lips she laid her head upon the back of the chair and fainted. Grief and uproar and confusion followed this alarming incident. The presence of mind so necessary on such occasions was wholly lost: one ran here, and another there, all jostling against each other, without being cool enough to render her proper assistance. The daughters were in tears, and Bartley himself was dreadfully shocked by seeing his wife apparently lifeless before him.

She soon recovered, however, and relieved them from the apprehension of her death, which they thought had actually taken place. "Mary," said her husband, "something quare entirely has happened, or you wouldn't be in this state!"

"Did any of you see a strange woman lavin' the house a minute or two before yees came in?" she inquired.

"No," they replied, "not a *stim* of any one did we see."

"*Wurrah dheelish!* No?—now is it possible yees didn't?" She then described her; but all declared they had seen no such person.

"Bartley, whisper," said she, and beckoning him over to her, in few words she revealed the secret. The husband grew pale, and crossed himself. "Mother of Saints!—childher," said he, "a *Lianhan Shee!*" The words were no sooner uttered than every countenance assumed the pallidness of death; and every right hand was raised in the act of blessing the person and crossing the forehead. "The *Lianhan Shee!*" all exclaimed, in fear and horror. "This day's Friday, God betwixt us an' harm!"[1]

[1] A formula which is supposed to be a safeguard against the fairies. The particular day had always to be named.

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It was now after dusk, and the hour had already deepened into the darkness of a calm, moonless summer night; the hearth, therefore, in a short time, became surrounded by a circle consisting of every person in the house; the door was closed and securely bolted; a struggle for the safest seat took place; and to Bartley's shame be it spoken, he lodged himself on the hob within the jamb, as the most distant situation from the fearful being known as the *Lianhan Shee*. The recent terror, however, brooded over them all; their topic of conversation was the mysterious visit, of which Mrs. Sullivan gave a painfully accurate detail; whilst every ear of those who composed her audience was set, and every single hair of their heads bristled up as if awakened into distinct life by the story. Bartley looked into the fire soberly, except when the cat, in prowling about the dresser, electrified him into a start of fear, which sensation went round every link of the living chain about the hearth.

The next day the story spread through the whole parish, accumulating in interest and incident as it went. Where it received the touches, embellishments, and emendations with which it was amplified, it would be difficult to say; every one told it, forsooth, exactly as he heard it from another; but, indeed, it is not improbable that those through whom it passed were unconscious of the additions it had received at their hands. It is not unreasonable to suppose that imagination in such cases often colours highly without a premeditated design of falsehood. Fear and dread, however, accompanied its progress; such families as had neglected to keep holy water in their houses borrowed some from their neighbours; every old prayer which had become rusty from disuse was brightened up; charms were hung about the necks of cattle, and gospels about those of children; crosses were placed over the doors and windows; no unclean water was thrown out before sunrise or after dusk;

> "E'en those prayed now who never prayed before,
> And those who always prayed still prayed the more."

The inscrutable woman who caused such general dismay in the parish was an object of much pity. Avoided, feared, and detested, she could find no rest for her weary feet,

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nor any shelter for her unprotected head. If she was seen approaching a house, the door and windows were immediately closed against her; if met on the way, she was avoided as a pestilence. How she lived, no one could tell, for none would permit themselves to know. It was asserted that she existed without meat or drink, and that she was doomed to remain possessed of life, the prey of hunger and thirst, until she could get some one weak enough to break the spell by drinking her hellish draught, to taste which, they said, would be to change places with herself and assume her despair and misery.

There had lived in the country, about six months before her appearance in it, a man named Stephenson. He was unmarried and the last of his family. This person led a solitary and secluded life, exhibiting, during the last years of his existence, strong symptoms of eccentricity, which, for some months before his death, assumed a character of unquestionable derangement. He was found one morning hanging by a halter in his own stable, where he had, under the influence of his malady, committed suicide. At this time the public press had not, as now, familiarised the minds of the people to that dreadful crime, and it was consequently looked upon then with an intensity of horror of which we can scarcely entertain any adequate notion. His farm remained unoccupied; for while an acre of land could be obtained in any other quarter, no man would enter upon such unhallowed premises. The house was locked up, and it was currently reported that Stephenson and the devil each night repeated the hanging scene in the stable; and that when the former was committing the "hopeless sin," the halter slipped several times from the beam of the stable loft, when Satan came, in the shape of a dark-complexioned man with a hollow voice, and secured the rope until Stephenson's end was accomplished.

In this stable did the wanderer take up her residence at night; and when we consider the belief of the people in the night-scenes which occurred in it, we need not be surprised at the new feature of horror which this circumstance superadded to her character. Her presence and appearance in the parish were dreadful; a public outcry was soon raised against her, which, were it not from fear of her power over their

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lives and cattle, would have ended in her death. None, however, had courage to grapple with her, or to attempt expelling her by violence, lest a signal vengeance might be taken on any who dared to injure a woman that could call in the terrible aid of the *Lianhan Shee*.

In this state of feeling they applied to the parish priest, who, on hearing the marvellous stories related concerning her, and on questioning each man closely upon his authority, could perceive that, like most other reports, they were to be traced principally to the imagination and fears of the people. He ascertained, however, enough from Bartley Sullivan to justify a belief that there was something certainly uncommon about the woman; and being of a cold, phlegmatic disposition, with some humour, he desired them to go home, if they were wise—he shook his head mysteriously as he spoke—"and do the woman no injury, if they didn't wish——" and with this abrupt hint he sent them about their business.

This, however, did not satisfy them. In the same parish lived a suspended priest, called Father Philip O'Dallaghy, who supported himself, as most of them do, by curing certain diseases of the people—miraculously! He had no other means of subsistence; nor indeed did he seem strongly devoted to life, or to the pleasures it afforded. He was not addicted to those intemperate habits which characterise "blessed priests" in general; spirits he never tasted, nor any food that could be termed a luxury or even a comfort. His communion with the people was brief, and marked by a tone of severe, contemptuous misanthropy. He seldom stirred abroad, except during morning, or in the evening twilight, when he might be seen gliding amidst the coming darkness like a dissatisfied spirit. His life was an austere one, and his devotional practices were said to be of the most remorseful character. Such a man, in fact, was calculated to hold a powerful sway over the prejudices and superstitions of the people. This was true. His power was considered almost unlimited, and his life one that would not disgrace the highest saint in the calendar. There were not wanting some persons in the parish who hinted that Father Felix O'Rourke, the parish priest, was himself rather reluctant to incur the displeasure, or challenge the power, of the *Lianhan Shee*, by

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driving its victim out of the parish. The opinion of these persons was, in its distinct, unvarnished reality, that Father Felix absolutely showed the white feather on this critical occasion—that he became shy, and begged leave to decline being introduced to this intractable pair—seeming to intimate that he did not at all relish adding them to the stock of his acquaintances.

Father Philip they considered as a decided contrast to him on this point. His stern and severe manner, rugged, and, when occasion demanded, daring, they believed suitable to the qualities requisite for sustaining such an interview. They according waited on him; and after Bartley and his friends had given as faithful a report of the circumstances as, considering all things, could be expected, he told Bartley he would hear from Mrs. Sullivan's own lips the authentic narrative. This was quite satisfactory, and what was expected from him. As for himself, he appeared to take no particular interest in the matter, further than that of allaying the ferment and alarm which had spread through the parish.

"Plase your reverence," said Bartley, "she came in to Mary, and she alone in the house, and for the matther o' that, I believe she laid hands upon her, and tossed and tumbled the crathur, and she but a sickly woman, through the four corners of the house. Not that Mary lets an so much, but I know from her way when she spakes about her that it's thruth, your reverence."

"But didn't the *Lianhan Shee*," said one of them, "put a sharp-pointed knife to her breast, wid a divilish intintion of makin' her give the best of atin' an' dhrinkin' the house afforded?"

"She got the victuals, to a sartinty," replied Bartley, "and 'overlooked' my woman for her pains; for she's not the picture of herself since."

Every one now told some magnified and terrible circumstance illustrating the formidable power of the *Lianhan Shee*.

When they had finished, the sarcastic lip of the priest curled into an expression of irony and contempt; his brow, which was naturally black and heavy, darkened; and a keen but rather ferocious-looking eye shot forth a glance which,

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while it intimated disdain for those to whom it was directed, spoke also of a dark and troubled spirit in himself. The man seemed to brook with scorn the degrading situation of a religious quack, to which some uncontrollable destiny had doomed him.

"I shall see your wife to-morrow," said he to Bartley; "and after hearing the plain account of what happened, I will consider what is best to be done with this dark, perhaps unhappy, perhaps guilty character; but whether dark, or unhappy, or guilty, I, for one, should not, and will not, avoid her. Go, and bring me word to-morrow evening when I can see her on the following day. Begone!"

When Bartley went home, he communicated to his wife Father Philip's intention of calling on the following day, to hear a correct account of the *Lianhan Shee*.

"Why, thin," said she, "I'm glad of it, for I intinded myself to go to him, anyway, to get my new scapular consecrated. How-an'-ever, as he's to come, I'll get a set of gospels for the boys an' girls, an' he can consecrate all when his hand's in. *Aroon*, Bartley, they say that man's so holy that he can do anything—ay, melt a body off the face o' the earth, like snow off a ditch. Dear me, but the power they have is strange, all out!"

"There's no use in gettin' him anything to ate or dhrink," replied Bartley; "he wouldn't take a glass o' whisky once in seven years. Throth, myself thinks he's a little too dhry; sure, he might be holy enough and yet take a sup of an odd time. There's Father Felix, an' though, as we all know, he's far from bein' so blessed a man as he is, yet he has friendship and neighbourliness in him, an' never refuses a glass in rason."

"But do you know what I was tould about Father Philip, Bartley?"

"I'll tell you that afther I hear it, Mary, my woman; you won't expect me to tell what I don't know?—ha! ha! ha!"

"Behave, Bartley, an' quit your jokin' now, at all evints; keep it till we're talkin' of somethin' else, an' don't let us be committin' sin, maybe, while we're spakin' of what we're spakin' about; but they say it's as thrue as the sun to the dial—the Lint afore last it was—he never tasted mate or

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dhrink durin' the whole seven weeks! Oh, you needn't stare! it's well known by thim that has as much sinse as you —no, not so much as you'd carry on the point o' this knittin' needle. Well, sure, the housekeeper an' the two sarvants wondhered—faix, they couldn't do less—an' took it into their heads to watch him closely; an' what do you think—blessed be all the saints above!—what do you think they seen?"

"The goodness above knows; for me—I don't."

"Why, thin, whin he was asleep they seen a small silk thread in his mouth that came down through the ceilin' from heaven, and he suckin' it, just as a child would his mother's breast whin the crathur ud be asleep: so that was the way he was supported by the angels! An' I remimber myself, though he's a dark, spare, yallow man at all times, yet he never looked half so fat an' rosy as he did the same Lint!"

"Glory be to heaven! Well, well—it is sthrange the power they have! As for him, I'd as lee meet St. Pether, or St. Pathrick himself, as him; for one can't but fear him, somehow."

"Fear him! Och, it ud be the pity o' thim that ud do anything to vex or anger that man. Why, his very look ud wither thim, till there wouldn't be the thrack o' thim on the earth; an' as for his curse, why, it ud scorch thim to ashes."

As it was generally known that Father Philip was to visit Mrs. Sullivan the next day, in order to hear an account of the mystery which filled the parish with such fear, a very great number of the parishioners were assembled in and about Bartley's long before he made his appearance. At length he was seen walking slowly down the road, with an open book in his hand, on the pages of which he looked from time to time. When he approached the house, those who were standing about it assembled in a body, and with one consent uncovered their heads and asked his blessing. His appearance bespoke a mind ill at ease; his face was haggard, and his eyes bloodshot. On seeing the people kneel, he smiled with his usual bitterness, and shaking his hand with an air of impatience over them, muttered some words, rather in mockery of the ceremony than otherwise. They then rose, and blessing themselves, put on their hats, rubbed the

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dust off their knees, and appeared to think themselves recruited by a peculiar accession of grace.

On entering the house the same form was repeated; and when it was over, the best chair was placed for him by Mary's own hands, and the fire stirred up, and a line of respect drawn, within which none was to intrude, lest he might feel in any degree incommoded.

"My good neighbour," said he to Mrs. Sullivan, "what strange woman is this who has thrown the parish into such a ferment? I'm told she paid you a visit? Pray sit down."

"I humbly thank your reverence," said Mary, curtseying lowly, "but I'd rather not sit, sir, if you plase. I hope I know what respect manes, your reverence?—Barny Bradagh, I'll thank you to stand up, if you plase, an' his reverence to the fore, Barny."

"I ax your reverence's pardon, an' yours, too, Mrs. Sullivan; sure, we didn't mane the disrespect, anyhow, sir, plase your reverence."

"About this woman, and the *Lianhan Shee?*" said the priest, without noticing Barny's apology. "Pray what do you precisely understand by a *Lianhan Shee?*"

"Why, sir," replied Mary, "some sthrange bein' from the good people, or fairies, that sticks to some persons. There's a bargain, sir, your reverence, made atween thim; an' the divil, sir, that is the ould boy—the saints above us!—has a hand in it. The *Lianhan Shee*, your reverence, is never seen, only by thim it keeps wid; but—hem!—it always, wid the help of the ould boy, conthrives, sir, to make the person break the agreement, an' thin it has thim in its power; but if they don't break the agreement, thin it's in their power. If they can get anybody to put in their place, they may get out o' the bargain; for they can, of a sartinty, give oceans o' money to people, but can't take any themselves, plase your reverence. But, sure, where's the use o' me to be tellin' your reverence what you know betther nor myself?—an' why shouldn't you, or any one that has the power you have?"

He smiled again at this in his own peculiar manner, and was proceeding to inquire more particularly into the nature of the interview between them, when the noise of feet, and sounds of general alarm, accompanied by a rush of people

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into the house, arrested his attention, and he hastily inquired into the cause of the commotion. Before he could receive a reply, however, the house was almost crowded; and it was not without considerable difficulty that, by the exertions of Mrs. Sullivan and Bartley, sufficient order and quiet were obtained to hear distinctly what was said.

"Plase your reverence," said several voices at once, "they're comin' hot-foot into the very house to us! Was ever the likes seen? an' they must know right well, sir, that you're widin it."

"Who are coming?" he inquired.

"Why, the woman, sir, an' her good pet, the *Lianhan Shee*, your reverence."

"Well," said he, "but why should you all appear so blanched with terror? Let her come in, and we shall see how far she is capable of injuring her fellow-creatures. Some maniac," he muttered, in a low soliloquy, "whom the villainy of the world has driven into derangement—some victim to a hand like m—— Well, they say there is a Providence, yet such things are permitted?"

"He's sayin' a prayer now," observed one of them. "Haven't we a good right to be thankful that he's in the place wid us while she's in it, or dear knows what harm she might do us—maybe rise the wind!"[1]

As the latter speaker concluded, there was a dead silence. The persons about the door crushed each other backwards, their feet set out before them, and their shoulders laid with violent pressure against those who stood behind; for each felt anxious to avoid all danger of contact with a being against whose power even a blessed priest found it necessary to guard himself by a prayer.

At length a low murmur ran among the people. "Father O'Rourke!—here's Father O'Rourke!—he has turned the corner afther her, an' they're both comin' in." Immediately they entered; but it was quite evident, from the manner of the worthy priest, that he was unacquainted with the person of this singular being. When they crossed the threshold,

[1] It is believed in Ireland that those in league with the devil can raise the wind by calling him up, and that it cannot be laid except by a black cock, a black dog, or an unchristened child.

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the priest advanced, and expressed his surprise at the throng of people assembled.

"Plase your reverence," said Bartley, "that's the woman," nodding significantly towards her as he spoke, but without looking at her person, lest the evil eye he dreaded so much might meet his and give him "the blast."

The dreaded female, on seeing the house in such a crowded state, started, paused, and glanced with some terror at the persons assembled. Her dress was not altered since her last visit; but her countenance, though more meagre and emaciated, expressed but little of the unsettled energy which then flashed from her eyes, and distorted her features by the depth of that mysterious excitement by which she had been agitated. Her countenance was still muffled as before; the awful protuberance rose from her shoulders; and the same band which Mrs. Sullivan had alluded to during their interview was bound about the upper part of her forehead.

She had already stood upwards of two minutes, during which the fall of a feather might be heard, yet none bade God bless her—no kind hand was extended to greet her —no heart warmed in affection towards her; on the contrary, every eye glanced at her as a being marked with enmity towards God. Blanched faces and knit brows, the signs of fear and hatred, were turned upon her; her breath was considered pestilential, and her touch paralysis. There she stood, proscribed, avoided, and hunted like a tigress, all fearing to encounter, yet wishing to exterminate her! Who could she be? or what had she done, that the finger of the Almighty marked her out for such a fearful weight of vengeance?

Father Philip rose, and advanced a few steps, until he stood confronting her. His person was tall, his features dark, severe, and solemn; and when the nature of the investigation about to take place is considered, it need not be wondered at that the moment was, to those present, one of deep and impressive interest—such as a visible conflict between a supposed champion of God and a supernatural being was calculated to excite.

"Woman," said he, in his deep, stern voice, "tell me who and what you are, and why you assume a character of such

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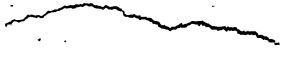

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a repulsive and mysterious nature, when it can entail only misery, shame, and persecution on yourself? I conjure you, in the name of Him after whose image you are created, to speak truly!"

He paused, and the tall figure stood mute before him. The silence was dead as death—every breath was hushed—and the persons assembled stood immovable as statues! Still she spoke not; but the violent heaving of her breast evinced the internal working of some dreadful struggle. Her face before was pale—it was now ghastly; her lips became blue, and her eyes vacant.

"Speak!" said he—"I conjure you in the name of the power by whom you live!"

It is probable that the agitation under which she laboured was produced by the severe effort made to sustain the unexpected trial she had to undergo.

For some minutes her struggle continued; but having begun at its highest pitch, it gradually subsided until it settled in a calmness which appeared fixed and awful as the resolution of despair. With breathless composure she turned round, and put back that part of her dress which concealed her face, except the band on her forehead, which she did not remove; having done this, she turned again, and walked calmly towards Father Philip, with a deadly smile upon her thin lips. When within a step of where he stood, she paused, and riveting her eyes upon him, exclaimed—

"Who and what am I? The victim of infidelity and you, the bearer of a cursed existence, the scoff and scorn of the world, the monument of a broken vow and a guilty life, a being scourged by the scorpion lash of conscience, blasted by periodical insanity, pelted by the winter's storm, scorched by the summer's heat, withered by starvation, hated by man, and touched into my inmost spirit by the anticipated tortures of future misery. I have no rest for the sole of my foot, no repose for a head distracted by the contemplation of a guilty life; I am the unclean spirit which walketh to seek rest and findeth none; I am—what *you* made me! Behold," she added, holding up the bottle —"this failed, and I live to accuse you. But no, you are

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my husband—though our union was but a guilty form, and I will bury that in silence. You thought me dead, and you flew to avoid punishment—did you avoid it? No; the finger of God has written pain and punishment upon your brow. I have been in all characters, in all shapes—have spoken with the tongue of a peasant—moved in my natural sphere; but my knees were smitten, my brain stricken, and the wild malady which banishes me from society has been upon me for years. Such I am, and such, I say, have you made me. As for you, kind-hearted woman, there was nothing in this bottle but pure water. The interval of reason returned this day, and having remembered glimpses of our conversation, I came to apologise to you, and to explain the nature of my unhappy distemper, and to beg a little bread, which I have not tasted for two days. I at times conceive myself attended by an evil spirit, shaped out by a guilty conscience, and this is the only familiar which attends me, and by it I have been dogged into madness through every turning of life. Whilst it lasts I am subject to spasms and convulsive starts which are exceedingly painful. The lump on my back is the robe I wore when innocent in my peaceful convent."

The intensity of general interest was now transferred to Father Philip; every face was turned towards him, but he cared not. A solemn stillness yet prevailed among all present. From the moment she spoke, her eye drew his with the power of a basilisk. His pale face became like marble—not a muscle moved; and when she ceased speaking, his bloodshot eyes were still fixed upon her countenance with a gloomy calmness like that which precedes a tempest. They stood before each other, dreadful counterparts in guilt, for truly his spirit was as dark as hers.

At length he glanced angrily around him. "Well," said he "what is it now, ye infatuated wretches, to trust in the sanctity of man? Learn from me to place the same confidence in God which you place in His guilty creatures, and you will not lean on a broken reed. Father O'Rourke, you, too, witness my disgrace, but not my punishment. It is pleasant, no doubt, to have a topic for conversation at your conferences; enjoy it. As for you, Margaret, if society lessen

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misery, we may be less miserable. But the band of your order and the remembrance of your vow is on your forehead, like the mark of Cain—tear it off, and let it not blast a man who is the victim of prejudice still, nay, of superstition, as well as of guilt—tear it from my sight." His eyes kindled fearfully as he attempted to pull it away by force.

She calmly took it off, and he immediately tore it into pieces, and stamped upon the fragments as he flung them on the ground.

"Come," said the despairing man—"come—there is a shelter for you, but no peace!—food, and drink, and raiment, but no peace!—NO PEACE!" As he uttered these words, in a voice that rose rapidly to its highest pitch, he took her hand, and they both departed to his own residence.

The amazement and horror of those who were assembled in Bartley's house cannot be described. Our readers may be assured that they deepened in character as they spread through the parish. An undefined fear of this mysterious pair seized upon the people, for their images were associated in their minds with darkness and crime and supernatural communion. The departing words of Father Philip rang in their ears: they trembled, and devoutly crossed themselves, as fancy again repeated the awful exclamation of the priest—"No peace! no peace!"

When Father Philip and his unhappy associate went home he instantly made her a surrender of his small property; but with difficulty did he command sufficient calmness to accomplish even this. He was distracted—his blood seemed to have been turned to fire—he clenched his hands, and he gnashed his teeth, and exhibited the wildest symptoms of madness. About ten o'clock he desired fuel for a large fire to be brought into the kitchen, and got a strong cord, which he coiled and threw carelessly on the table. The family were then ordered to bed. About eleven they were all asleep; and at the solemn hour of twelve he heaped additional fuel upon the living turf, until the blaze shone with scorching light through the kitchen. Dark and desolating was the tempest within him as he paced with agitated steps before the crackling fire.

"She is risen!" he exclaimed—"the spectre of all my

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crimes is risen, to haunt me through life! I am a murderer —yet she lives, and my guilt is not the less! The stamp of eternal infamy is upon me—the finger of scorn will mark me out—the tongue of reproach will sting me like that of the serpent—the deadly touch of shame will cover me like a leper—the laws of society will crush the murderer, not the less that his wickedness in blood has miscarried; after that comes the black and terrible tribunal of the Almighty's vengeance—of His fiery indignation! Hush!—what sounds are those? They deepen—they deepen! Is it thunder? It cannot be the crackling of the blaze! It is thunder!—but it speaks only to my ear! Hush! Great God, there is a change in my voice! It is hollow and supernatural! Could a change have come over me? Am I living? Could I have—hah!—could I have departed? and am I now at length given over to the worm that never dies? If it be at my heart I may feel it. God!—I am damned! Here is a viper twined about my limbs, trying to dart its fangs into my heart! Hah! there are feet pacing in the room, too, and I hear voices! I am surrounded by evil spirits! Who's there?—what are you?—speak!—They are silent!—there is no answer! Again comes the thunder! But, perchance this is not my place of punishment, and I will try to leave these horrible spirits!"

He opened the door, and passed out into a small green field that lay behind the house. The night was calm, and the silence profound as death. Not a cloud obscured the heavens; the light of the moon fell upon the stillness of the scene around him with all the touching beauty of a moonlit midnight in summer. Here he paused a moment, felt his brow, then his heart, the palpitations of which fell audibly upon his ear. He became somewhat cooler; the images of madness which had swept through his stormy brain disappeared, and were succeeded by a lethargic vacancy of thought which almost deprived him of the consciousness of his own identity. From the green field he descended mechanically to a little glen which opened beside it. It was one of those delightful spots to which the heart clingeth. Its sloping sides were clothed with patches of wood, on the leaves of which the moonlight glanced with a soft lustre, rendered more beautiful

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by their stillness. That side on which the light could not fall lay in deep shadow, which occasionally gave to the rocks and small projecting precipices an appearance of monstrous and unnatural life. Having passed through the tangled mazes of the glen, he at length reached its bottom, along which ran a brook, such as, in the description of the poet—

> "In the leafy month of June,
> Unto the sleeping woods all night,
> Singeth a quiet tune."

Here he stood, and looked upon the green winding margin of the streamlet—but its song he heard not. With the terrors of a guilty conscience the beautiful in nature can have no association. He looked up the glen; but its picturesque windings, soft vistas, and wild underwood mingling with grey rocks and taller trees, all mellowed by the moonbeams, had no charms for him. He maintained a profound silence—but it was not the silence of reflection. He endeavoured to recall the scenes of the past day, but could not bring them back to his memory. Even the fiery tide of thought which, like burning lava, seared his brain a few moments before, was now cold and hardened. He could remember nothing. The convulsion of his mind was over, and his faculties were impotent and collapsed.

In this state he unconsciously retraced his steps, and had again reached the paddock adjoining his house, when, as he thought, the figure of his paramour stood before him. In a moment his former paroxysm returned, and with it the gloomy images of a guilty mind, charged with the extravagant horrors of brain-struck madness.

"What!" he exclaimed, "the band still on your forehead! Tear it off!"

He caught at the form as he spoke, but there was no resistance to his grasp. On looking again towards the spot, she had ceased to be visible. The storm within him arose once more: he rushed into the kitchen, where the fire blazed out with fiercer heat; again he imagined that the thunder came to his ears, but the thunderings which he heard were only the voice of conscience. Again his own footsteps and his voice sounded in his fancy as the footsteps and voices of

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fiends, with which his imagination peopled the room. His state and his existence seemed to him a confused and troubled dream; he tore his hair—threw it on the table—and immediately started back with a hollow groan. His locks, which but a few hours before had been as black as the raven's wing, were now white as snow!

On discovering this he gave a low but frantic laugh. "Ha, ha, ha!" he exclaimed, "here is another mark—here is food for despair! Silently but surely did the hand of God work this, as a proof that I am hopeless! But I will bear it—I will bear the sight! I now feel myself a man blasted by the eye of God Himself! Ha, ha, ha! Food for despair! —food for despair!"

Immediately he passed into his own room, and approaching the looking-glass, beheld a sight calculated to move a statue. His hair had become literally white, but the shades of his dark complexion, now distorted by terror and madness, flitted, as his features worked under the influence of his tremendous passions, into an expression so frightful that deep fear came over himself. He snatched one of his razors, and fled from the glass to the kitchen. He looked upon the fire, and saw the white ashes lying around its edge.

"Ha!" said he, "the light is come! I see the sign. I am directed, and I will follow it. There is yet ONE hope—the immolation! I shall be saved, yet so as by fire. It is for this my hair has become white—the sublime warning for my self-sacrifice! The colour of ashes!—white—white! It is so!—I will sacrifice my body in material fire, to save my soul from that which is eternal! But I had anticipated the SIGN! The self-sacrifice is accepted!"

We must here draw a veil over that which ensued. Let it be sufficient to say that the next morning he was burned to a cinder, with the exception of his feet and legs, which remained as monuments of, perhaps, the most dreadful suicide that ever was committed by man. His razor, too, was found bloody, and several clots of gore were discovered about the hearth; from which circumstances it was plain that he had reduced his strength so much by loss of blood that when he committed himself to the flames he was unable, even had he been willing, to avoid the fiery and awful

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sacrifice of which he made himself the victim. If anything could deepen the impression of fear and awe already so general among the people, it was the unparalleled nature of his death. Its circumstances are well known in the parish and county wherein it occurred; for it is no fiction, gentle reader! and the titular bishop who then presided over the diocese declared that while he lived no person bearing the unhappy man's name should ever be admitted to the clerical order.

The shock produced by his death struck the miserable woman into the darkness of settled derangement. She survived him some years, but wandered about through the province, still, according to the superstitious belief of the people, tormented by the terrible enmity of the *Lianhan Shee.*

As the reader may be disposed to consider the nature of the priest's death an unjustifiable stretch of fiction, I have only to say, in reply, that it is no fiction at all. It is not, I believe, more than forty, or perhaps fifty, years since a priest committed his body to the flames for the purpose of saving his soul by an incrematory sacrifice. The object of a suicide unparalleled in the history of that mad and melancholy crime was ascertained by a letter which he left behind him. There is an old dormant superstition still to be found in Ireland on this very subject. It is believed by some that a priest guilty of great crimes possesses the privilege of securing salvation by self-sacrifice. We have heard two or three legends among the people in which this principle predominated. The outlines of one of these, called "The Young Priest and Brian Braar," were as follows:—

A young priest on his way to the College of Valladolid, in Spain, was benighted, but found a lodging in a small inn on the roadside. Here he was tempted by a young maiden of great beauty, who, in the moment of his weakness, extorted from him a bond signed with his blood, binding himself to her for ever. She turned out to be an evil spirit; and the young priest proceeded to Valladolid with a heavy heart, confessed his crime to the superior, who sent him to the Pope, who sent him to a friar in the county of Armagh,

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called Brian Braar, who sent him to the devil. The devil, on the strength of Brian Braar's letter, gave him a warm reception, held a cabinet council immediately, and laid the despatch before his colleagues, who agreed that the claimant should get back his bond from the brimstone lady who had inveigled him. She, however, obstinately refused to surrender it, and stood upon her bond, until threatened with being thrown three times into Brian Braar's furnace. This tamed her: the man got his bond, and returned to Brian Braar on earth. Now, Brian Braar had for three years past abandoned God, and taken to the study of magic with the devil—a circumstance which accounts for his influence below. The young priest, having possessed himself of his bond, went to Lough Derg to wash away his sins; and Brian Braar having also become penitent, the two worthies accompanied each other to the lake. On entering the boat, however, to cross over to the island, such a storm arose as drove them back. Brian assured his companion that he himself was the cause of it.

"There is now," said he, "but one more chance for me, and we must have recourse to it."

He then returned homewards, and both had reached a hillside near Brian's house, when the latter desired the young priest to remain there a few minutes, and he would return to him; which he did, with a hatchet in his hand.

"Now," said he, "you must cut me into four quarters, and mince my body into small bits, then cast them into the air, and let them go with the wind."

The priest, by much entreaty, complied with his wishes, and returned to Lough Derg, where he lived twelve years upon one meal of bread and water *per diem*. Having now purified himself, he returned home; but on passing the hill where he had minced the friar, he was astonished to see the same man celebrating mass, attended by a very penitential-looking congregation of spirits.

"Ah," said Brian Braar, when mass was over, "you are now a happy man. With regard to my state, for the voluntary sacrifice I have made of myself, I am to be saved; but I must remain on this mountain until the Day of Judgment." So saying, he disappeared.

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There is little to be said about the superstition of the *Lianhan Shee,* except that it existed as we have drawn it, and that it is now fading fast away. There is also something appropriate in associating the heroine of this little story with the being called the *Lianhan Shee,* because, setting the superstition aside, any female who fell into her crime was called a *Lianhan Shee. Lianhan Shee an Sagarth* signifies a priest's paramour, or, as the country people say, "Miss." Both terms have now nearly become obsolete.

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THE GEOGRAPHY OF AN IRISH OATH

PETER CONNELL was for many years of his life a pattern and a proverb for industry and sobriety. He first began the world as keeper of a *shebeen*-house at the cross-roads, about four miles from the town of Ballypoteen. He was decidedly an honest man to his neighbours, but a knave to excisemen, whom he hated by a kind of instinct that he had, which prompted him, in order to satisfy his conscience, to render them every practicable injury within the compass of his ingenuity. *Shebeen*-house keepers and excisemen have been, time out of mind, destructive of each other; the exciseman pouncing like a beast or bird of prey upon the *shebeen* man and his illicit spirits; the *shebeen* man staving in the exciseman, like a barrel of doublings, by a knock from behind a hedge, which sometimes sent him to that world which is emphatically called the world of spirits. For this, it sometimes happened that the *shebeen* man was hanged; but as his death only multiplied that of the excisemen in a geometrical ratio, the sharp-scented fraternity resolved, if possible, not to risk their lives either by exposing themselves to the necessity of travelling by night or prosecuting by day. In this they acted wisely and prudently; fewer of the unfortunate peasantry were shot in their encounters with the yeomanry or military on such occasions, and the retaliations became by degrees less frequent, until, at length, the murder of a gauger became a rare occurrence in the country.

Peter, before his marriage, had wrought as labouring servant to a man who kept two or three private stills in those caverns among the remote mountains to which the gauger never thought of penetrating, because he supposed that no human enterprise would have ever dreamt of advancing farther into them than appeared to him to be practicable. In this he was frequently mistaken; for though the still-house was in many cases inaccessible to horses, yet by the

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contrivance of slipes—a kind of sledge—a dozen men could draw a couple of sacks of barley with less trouble, and at a quicker pace, than if horses only had been employed. By this, and many other similar contrivances, the peasantry were often able to carry on the work of private distillation in places so distant that few persons could suspect them as likely to be chosen for such purposes. The uncommon personal strength, the daring spirit, and great adroitness of Peter Connell rendered him a very valuable acquisition to his master in the course of his illicit occupations. Peter was, in addition to his other qualities, sober and ready-witted, so that whenever the gauger made his appearance, his expedients to baffle him were often inimitable. Those expedients did not, however, always arise from the exigency of the moment; they were often deliberately, and with much exertion of ingenuity, planned by the proprietors and friends of such establishments, perhaps for weeks before the gauger's visit occurred. But, on the other hand, as the gauger's object was to take them, if possible, by surprise, it frequently happened that his appearance was as unexpected as it was unwelcome. It was then that the prompt ingenuity of the people was fully seen, felt, and understood by the baffled exciseman, who too often had just grounds for bitterly cursing their talent at outwitting him.

Peter served his master as a kind of superintendent in such places, until he gained the full knowledge of distilling, according to the processes used by the most popular adepts in the art. Having acquired this, he set up as a professor, and had excellent business. In the meantime, he had put together by degrees a small purse of money, to the amount of about twenty guineas—no inconsiderable sum for a young Irishman who intends to begin the world on his own account. He accordingly married, and as the influence of a wife is usually not to be controlled during the honeymoon, Mrs. Connell prevailed on Peter to relinquish his trade of distiller, and to embrace some other mode of life that might not render their living so much asunder necessary. Peter suffered himself to be prevailed upon, and promised to have nothing more to do with private distillation—as a distiller. One of the greatest curses attending the lawless business is the idle and irregular

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habit of life which it gradually induces. Peter could not now relish the labour of an agriculturist, to which he had been bred; and yet he was too prudent to sit down and draw his own and his wife's support from so exhaustible a source as twenty guineas. Two or three days passed, during which "he cudgelled his brains," to use his own subsequent expression, in plans for future subsistence; two or three consultations were held with Ellish, in which their heads were laid together, and, as it was still the honeymoon, the subject-matter of the consultation, of course, was completely forgotten. Before the expiration of a second month, however, they were able to think of many other things, in addition to the fondlings and endearments of a new-married couple. Peter was every day becoming more his own man, and Ellish by degrees more her own woman. "The purple light of love," which had changed Peter's red head into a rich auburn, and his swivel eye into a knowing wink—exceedingly irresistible in his bachelorship, as he made her believe, to the country girls —had passed away, taking the aforesaid auburn along with it, and leaving nothing but the genuine carrot behind. Peter, too, on opening his eyes one morning about the beginning of the third month, perceived that his wife was, after all, nothing more than a thumping red-cheeked wench, with good eyes, a mouth rather large, and a nose very much resembling in its curve the seat of a saddle, allowing the top to correspond with the pommel.

"Pether," said she, "it's like a dhrame to me that you're neglectin' your business, *alanna*."

"Is it, you beauty? but maybe you'd first point out to me what business, barrin' buttherin' up yourself, I have to mind, you phanix bright?"

"Quit yourself, Pether! it's time for you to give up your ould ways; you caught one bird wid them, an' that's enough. What do you intind to do? It's full time for you to be lookin' about you."

"Lookin' about me! What do you mane, Ellish?"

"The dickens a bit o' me thought of it," replied the wife, laughing at the unintentional allusion to the circumspect character of Peter's eyes—"upon my faix, I didn't—ha, ha, ha!"

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"Why, thin, but you're full o' your fun, sure enough, if that's what you're at. Maybe, *avourneen*, if I had looked right afore me, as I ought to do, it's Katty Murray an' her snug farm I'd have, instead of——"

Peter hesitated. The rapid feelings of a woman, and an Irishwoman, quick and tender, had come forth and subdued him. She had not voluntarily alluded to his eyes; but on seeing Peter offended, she immediately expressed that sorrow and submission which are most powerful when accompanied by innocence, and when meekly assumed to pacify rather than to convince. A tear started to her eye, and with a voice melted into unaffected tenderness, she addressed him; but he scarcely gave her time to speak.

"No, *avourneen*, no; I won't say what I was goin' to mintion. I won't indeed, Ellish, dear; an' forgive me for woundin' your feelins, *alanna dhas*. Hell resave her an' her farm! I dunna what put her into my head at all; but I thought you wor jokin' me about my eyes—an' sure, if you war, *acushla*, that's no rason that I'd not allow you to do that and more wid your own Pether. Give me a *slewsther*,[1] *agra* —a sweet one, now!"

He then laid his mouth to hers, and immediately a sound, nearly resembling a pistol-shot, was heard through every part of the house. It was, in fact, a kiss upon a scale of such magnitude and magnificence that the Emperor of Morocco might not blush to be charged with it. A reconciliation took place, and in due time it was determined that Peter, as he understood *poteen*, should open a *shebeen*-house.

The moment this resolution was made, the wife kept coaxing him until he took a small house at the cross-roads before alluded to, where, in the course of a short time, he was established, if not in his line, yet in a mode of life approximating to it as nearly as the inclination of Ellish would permit. The cabin which they occupied had a kitchen in the middle, and a room at each end of it, in one of which was their own humble chaff bed, with its blue quilted drugget cover; in the other stood a couple of small tables, some stools, a short form, and one chair, being a present from his

[1] A kiss of fondness.

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father-in-law. These constituted Peter's whole establishment, so far as it defied the gauger. To this we must add a five-gallon keg of spirits hid in the garden, and a roll of smuggled tobacco. From the former he bottled, over night, as much as was usually drunk the following day; and from the tobacco, which was also kept underground, he cut, with the same caution, as much as to-morrow's exigencies might require. This he kept in his coat-pocket, a place where the gauger would never think of searching for it, divided into halfpenny and penny worths, ounces or half-ounces, according as it might be required; and as he had it without duty, the liberal spirit in which he dealt it out to his neighbours soon brought him a large increase of custom.

Peter's wife was an excellent manager, and he himself a pleasant, good-humoured man, full of whim and inoffensive mirth. His powers of amusement were of a high order, considering his station in life and his want of education. These qualities contributed in a great degree to bring both the young and the old to his house during the long winter nights, in order to hear the fine racy humour with which he related his frequent adventures and battles with excisemen. In the summer evenings he usually engaged a piper or fiddler, and had a dance—a contrivance by which he not only rendered himself popular, but increased his business.

In this mode of life the greatest source of anxiety to Peter and Ellish was the difficulty of not offending their friends by refusing to give them credit. Many plans were, with great skill and forethought, devised to obviate this evil; but all failed. A short board was first procured, on which they got written with chalk—

"No credit giv'n—barrin' a thrifle to Pether's friends."

Before a week passed after this intimation, the number of "Pether's friends" increased so rapidly that neither he nor Ellish knew the half of them. Every scamp in the parish was hand and glove with him; the drinking tribe, particularly, became desperately attached to him and Ellish. Peter was naturally kind-hearted, and found that his firmest resolutions too often gave way before the open flattery with

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which he was assailed. He then changed his hand, and left Ellish to bear the brunt of their blarney. Whenever any person or persons were seen approaching the house, Peter, if he had reason to expect an attack upon his indulgence, prepared himself for a retreat. He kept his eye to the window, and if they turned from the direct line of the road, he immediately slipped into bed, and lay close, in order to escape them. In the meantime they enter.

"God save all here! Ellish, *agra machree*, how are you?"

"God save you kindly! Faix, I'm middlin', I thank you, Condy. How is yourself, an' all at home?"

"Devil a heartier, barrin' my father, that's touched wid a loss of appetite afther his meals—ha, ha, ha!"

"*Musha*, the dickens be an you, Condy, but you're your father's son, anyway; the best company in Europe is the same man. Throth, whether you're jokin' or not, I'd be sarry to hear of anything to his disadvantage, dacent man. Boys, won't yees go down to the other room?"

"Go way wid yees, boys, till I spake to Ellish here about the affairs o' the nation. Why, Ellish, you stand the cut all to pieces—by the contints o' the book, you do. Pether doesn't stand it half so well. How is he, the thief?"

"Throth, he's not well to-day, in regard of a smotherin' about the heart he tuck this mornin' afther his breakfast. He jist laid himself on the bed a while, to see if it would go off of him—God be praised for all His marcies!"

"Thin, upon my *sole*vation, I'm sorry to hear it, and so will all at home, for there's not in the parish we're sittin' in a couple that our family has a greater regard an' friendship for than him an' yourself. Faix, my modher, no longer ago than Friday night last, argued down Bartle Meegan's throath that you and Biddy Martin war the two portliest weemen that comes into the chapel. God forgive myself, I was near quarrellin' wid Bartle on the head of it, bekase I tuck my modher's part, as I had good right to do."

"Thrath, I'm thankful to you both, Condy, for your kindness."

"Oh, the sarra taste o' kindness was in it all, Ellish, 'twas only the truth; an' as long as I live I'll stand up for that."

"*Arrah*, how is your aunt down at Carntall?"

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"Indeed, thin, but middlin', not gettin' her health: she'll soon give the crow a puddin', anyway; thin, Ellish, you thief, I'm in for the yallow boys. Do you know thim that came in wid me?"

"Why, thin, I can't say I do. Who are they, Condy?"

"Why, one o' them's a bachelor to my sisther Norah, a very dacent boy, indeed—him wid the frieze jock upon him, an' the buckskin breeches. The other three's from Teena-braighera beyant. They're related to my brother-in-law, Mick Dillon, by his first wife's brother-in-law's uncle. They're come to this neighbourhood till the 'Sizes, bad luck to them, goes over; for, you see, they're in a little throuble."

"The Lord grant them safe out of it, poor boys!"

"I brought them up here to treat them, poor fellows; an' Ellish, *avourneen*, you must credit me for whatsomever we may have. The thruth is, you see, that when we left home none of us had any notion of dhrinkin', or I'd a put a something in my pocket, so that I'm taken at an average. Bud-an-age—how is little Dan? Sowl, Ellish, that *gorsoon*, when he grows up, will be a credit to you. I don't think there's a finer child in Europe of his age, so there isn't."

"Indeed, he's a good child, Condy. But, Condy, *avick*, about givin' credit—by thim five crasses, if I could give score to any boy in the parish it ud be to yourself. It was only last night that I made a promise against doin' sich a thing for man or mortual. We're a'most broken an' harrish'd out o' house an' home by it; an' what's more, Condy, we intind to give up the business. The landlord's at us every day for his rint, an' we owe for the two last kegs we got, but hasn't a rap to meet aither o' thim—an' enough due to us if we could get it together; an' whisper, Condy, atween ourselves, that's what ails Pether, although he doesn't wish to let an to any one about it."

"Well, but you know I'm safe, Ellish?"

"I know you are, *avourneen*, as the bank itself; an' should have what you want wid a heart an' a half, only from the promise I made an my two knees last night aginst givin' credit to man or woman. Why the dickens didn't you come yistherday?"

"Didn't I tell you, woman alive, that it was by accident,

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an' that I wished to sarve the house, that we came at all. Come, come, Ellish; don't disgrace me afore my sisther's bachelor an' the sthrange boys that's to the fore. By this staff in my hand, I wouldn't for the best cow in our byre be put to the blush afore thim; an' besides, there's a *cleeveenship* atween your family an' ours."

"Condy, *avourneen*, say no more; if you were fed from the same breast wid me, I couldn't nor wouldn't break my promise; I wouldn't have the sin of it an me for the wealth o' the three kingdoms."

"Bedad, you're a quare woman; an' only that my regard for you is great entirely, we would be two, Ellish; but I know you're dacent still."

He then left her, and joined his friends in the little room that was appropriated for drinking, where, with a great deal of mirth, he related the failure of the plan they had formed for outwitting Peter and Ellish.

"Boys," said he, "she's too many for us! St. Pether himself wouldn't make a hand of her. Faix, she's a 'cute one. I palavered her at the rate of a hunt, an' she ped me back in my own coin, wid dacent intherest—but no whisky! Now to take a rise out o' Pether. Jist sit where yees are till I come back."

He then left them enjoying the intended "spree," and went back to Ellish.

"Well, I'm sure, Ellish, if any one had tuck their book oath that you'd refuse my father's son sich a thrifle, I wouldn't believe them. It's not wid Pether's knowledge you do it, I'll be bound. But bad as you thrated us, sure we must see how the poor fellow is, at any rate."

As he spoke, and before Ellish had time to prevent him, he pressed into the room where Peter lay.

"Why, tare alive, Pether, is it in bed you are at this hour o' the day?"

"Eh! What's that—who's that? Oh!"

"Why, thin, the sarra lie undher you, is that the way wid you?"

"Oh!—oh! Eh? Is that Condy?"

"All that's to the fore of him. What's asthray wid you, man alive?"

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"Throth, Condy, I don't know rightly. I went out wantin' my coat about a week ago, an' got cowld in the small o' the back; I've a pain in it ever since. Be sittin'."

"Is your heart safe? You have no smotherin' or anything upon it?"

"Why, thin, thank goodness, no; it's all about my back and my hinches."

"Divil a thing it is but a complaint they call an alloverness ails you, you skamer o' the world wide. 'Tis the oil o' the hazel, or a rubbin' down wid an oak towel, you want. Get up, I say, or, by this an' by that, I'll flail you widin an inch o' your life."

"Is it beside yourself you are, Condy?"

"No, no, faix; I've found you out: Ellish is afther tellin' me that it was a smotherin' on the heart; but it's a pain in the small of the back wid yourself. Oh, you born desaver! Get up, I say agin, afore I take the stick to you!"

"Why, thin, all sorts o' fortune to you, Condy—ha, ha, ha!—but you're the sarra's pet, for there's no escapin' you. What was that I hard atween you an' Ellish?" said Peter, getting up.

"The sarra matther to you. If you behave yourself, we may let you into the wrong side o' the sacret afore you die. Go an' get us a pint o' what you know," replied Condy, as he and Peter entered the kitchen.

"Ellish," said Peter, "I suppose you must give it to thim. Give it—give it, *avourneen*. Now, Condy, whin'll you pay me for this?"

"Never fret yourself about that; you'll be ped. Honour bright, as the black said whin he stole the boots."

"Now, Pether," said the wife, "sure it's no use axin' me to give it, afther the promise I made last night. Give it yourself; for me, I'll have no hand in sich things, good or bad. I hope we'll soon get out of it altogether, for myself's sick an' sore of it, dear knows!"

Peter accordingly furnished them with the liquor, and got a promise that Condy would certainly pay him at mass on the following Sunday, which was only three days distant. The fun of the boys was exuberant at Condy's success: they drank, and laughed, and sang, until pint after pint followed in rapid succession.

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Every additional inroad upon the keg brought a fresh groan from Ellish; and even Peter himself began to look blank as their potations deepened. When the night was far advanced they departed, after having first overwhelmed Ellish with professions of the warmest friendship, promising that in future she exclusively should reap whatever benefit was to be derived from their patronage.

In the meantime Condy forgot to perform his promise. The next Sunday passed, but Peter was not paid, nor was his clever debtor seen at mass, or in the vicinity of the *shebeen*-house, for many a month afterwards—an instance of ingratitude which mortified his creditor extremely. The latter, who felt that it was a "take in," resolved to cut short all hopes of obtaining credit from them in future. In about a week after the foregoing hoax he got up a board, presenting a more vigorous refusal of "score" than the former. His friends, who were more in number than he could possibly have imagined, on this occasion were altogether wiped out of the exception. The notice ran to the following effect:—

"Notice to the Public, *and to Pether Connell's friends in particlar*—Divil resave the morsel of credit will be got or given in this house, while there is stick or stone of it together, barrin' them that axes it has the *ready money*.

"PETHER × CONNELL, his mark.
"ELLISH × CONNELL, her mark."

This regulation, considering everything, was a very proper one. It occasioned much mirth among Peter's customers; but Peter cared little about that, provided he made the money.

The progress of his prosperity, dating it from so small a beginning, was certainly slow. He owed it principally to the careful habits of Ellish and his own sobriety. He was prudent enough to avoid placing any sign in his window by which his house could be known as a *shebeen;* for he was not ignorant that there is no class of men more learned in this species of hieroglyphics than excisemen. At all events, he was prepared for them, had they come to examine his premises. Nothing that could bring him within the law was ever kept visible.

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The cask that contained the *poteen* was seldom a week in the same place of concealment, which was mostly, as we have said, underground. The tobacco was weighed and subdivided into small quantities, which, in addition to what he carried in his pocket, were distributed in various crevices and crannies of the house—sometimes under the thatch, sometimes under a dish on the dresser, but generally in a damp place.

When they had been about two or three years thus employed, Peter, at the solicitation of the wife, took a small farm.

"You're stout and able," said she; "an' as I can manage the house widout you, wouldn't it be a good plan to take a bit o' ground—nine or ten acres, suppose—an' thry your hand at it? Sure, you war wanst the greatest man in the parish about a farm. Surely that ud be dacenter nor to be *slungein'* [1] about, invintin' truth and lies for other people, whin they're at their work, to make thim laugh, an' you doin' nothin' but standin' over thim, wid your hands down to the bottom o' your pockets? Do, Pether, thry it, *avick*, an' you'll see it'll prosper wid us, plase God."

"Faix, I'm ladin' an asier life, Ellish."

"But are you ladin' a dacenter or a more becominer life?"

"Why, I think, widout doubt, that's it's more becominer to walk about like a gintleman nor to be workin' like a slave."

"Gintleman! *Musha*, is it to the fair you're bringin' yourself? Why, you great big *bosthoon*, isn't it both a sin an' a shame to see you sailin' about among the neighbours, like a shtray turkey, widout a hand's turn to do? But, anyway, take my advice, *avillish*—will you, *aroon?*—an' faix you'll see how rich we'll get, wid a blessin'."

"Ellish, you're a deludher!"

"Well, an' what suppose? To be sure I am. Usen't you to be followin' me like a calf afther the finger?—ha, ha, ha! Will you do my biddin', Pether darlin'?"

Peter gave her a shrewd, significant wink, in contradiction to what he considered the degrading comparison she had just made.

[1] Lounging.

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"Ellish, you're beside the mark, you beauty—always put the saddle on the right horse, woman alive! Didn't you often an' often swear to me, upon two green ribbons acrass one another, that you liked a red head best, and that the redder it was you liked it the betther?"

"An' it was thruth, too; an' sure, by the same a-token, where could I get one half so red as your own? Faix, I knew what I was about! I wouldn't give you yet for e'er a young man in the parish, if I was a widda to-morrow. Will you take the land?"

"So, thin, afther all, if the head hadn't been an me, I wouldn't be a favourite wid you?—ha, ha, ha!"

"Get out wid you, an' spake sinse. Throth, if you don t say aither ay or no, I'll give myself no more bother about it. There we are now wid some guineas together, an'——Faix, Pether, you're vexin' me!"

"Do you want an answer?"

"Why, if it's plasin' to your honour, I'd have no objection."

"Well, will you have my new big coat made agin Shraft?"[1]

"Ay, will I, in case you do what I say; but if you don't, the sarra stitch of it'll go to your back this twelvemonth, maybe, if you vex me. Now!"

"Well, I'll tell you what: my mind's made up—I will take the land; an' I'll show the neighbours what Pether Connell can do yit."

"Augh! augh! *mavourneen*, that you wor! Throth, I'll fry a bit o' the bacon for our dinner to-day, on the head o' that, although I didn't intind to touch it till Sunday. Ay, faix, an' a pair o' stockins, too, along wid the coat; an' somethin' else that you didn't hear of yit!"

Ellish, in fact, was a perfect mistress of the science of wheedling; but as it appears instinctive in the sex, it is not to be wondered at. Peter himself was easy, or rather indolent, till properly excited by the influence of adequate motives; but no sooner were the energies that slumbered in him called into activity than he displayed a firmness of purpose, and a perseverance in action, that amply repaid his exertions.

[1] Shrovetide.

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The first thing he did after taking his little farm, was to prepare for its proper cultivation and to stock it. His funds were not, however, sufficient for this at the time. A horse was to be bought, but the last guinea they could spare had been already expended, and this purchase was therefore out of the question. The usages of the small farmers, however, enabled him to remedy this inconvenience. Peter made a bargain with a neighbour, in which he undertook to repay him, by an exchange of labour, for the use of his plough and horses in getting down his crop. He engaged to give him, for a stated period in the slack season, so many days' mowing as would cover the expenses of ploughing and harrowing his land. There was, however, a considerable portion of his holding potato-ground; this Peter himself dug with his spade, breaking it as he went along into fine mould. He then sowed the seed—got a hatchet, and selecting the best thorn-bush he could find, cut it down, tied a rope to the trunk, seized the rope, and in this manner harrowed his potato-ground. Thus did he proceed, struggling to overcome difficulties by skill, and substituting for the more efficient modes of husbandry such rude artificial resources as his want of capital compelled him to adopt.

In the meantime, Ellish, seeing Peter acquitting himself in his undertaking with such credit, determined not to be outdone in her own department. She accordingly conceived the design of extending her business, and widening the sphere of her exertions. This intention, however, she kept secret from Peter, until, by putting penny to penny, and shilling to shilling, she was able to purchase a load of crockery. Here was a new source of profit opened exclusively by her own address. Peter was astonished when he saw the car unloaded, and the crockery piled in proud array by Ellish's own hands.

"I knew," said she, "I'd take a start out o' you. Faix, Pether, you'll see how I'll do, never fear, wid the help o' Heaven. I'll be off to the market in the mornin', plase God, where I'll sell rings round me[1] o' them crocks an' pitchers. An' now, Pether, the sarra one o' me would do this, good or

[1] Plenty—a good many.

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bad, only bekase you're managin' the farm so cleverly. Tady Gormley's goin' to bring home his meal from the mill, and has promised to lave these in the market for me, an' never fear but I'll get some o' the neighbours to bring them home, so that there's cart-hire saved. Faix, Pether, there's nothin' like givin' the people sweet words, anyway; sure, they come chape."

"Faith, an' I'll back you for the sweet words agin any woman in the three kingdoms, Ellish, you darlin'. But don't you know the proverb, 'Sweet words butther no parsnips'?"

"In throth, the same proverb's a lying one, and ever was; but it's not parsnips I'll butther wid 'em, you *gommoch*."

"Sowl, you butthered me wid 'em long enough, you deludher—devil a lie in it; but thin, as you say, sure enough, I was no parsnip—not so soft as that aither, you phanix!"

"No? Thin, I sildom seen your beautiful head widout thinkin' of a carrot, an' it's well known they're related—ha, ha, ha! Behave, Pether—behave, I say—Pether, Pether—ha, ha, ha!—let me alone! Katty Hacket, take him away from me—ha, ha, ha!"

"Will ever you, you shaver wid the tongue that you are—will ever you, I say—will ever you make delusion to my head agin—eh?"

"Oh, never, never—but let me go, an' me so full o' tickles! Oh, Pether, *avourneen*, don't, you'll hurt me, an' me the way I'm in—quit, *avillish!*"

"Bedad, if you don't let my head alone, I'll—will ever you——?"

"Never, never. There now—ha, ha, ha!—oh, but I'm as wake as wather wid what I laughed. Well, now, Pether, didn't I manage bravely—didn't I?"

"Wait till we see the profits first, Ellish—crockery's very tindher goods."

"Ay!—jist wait, an' I'll engage I'll turn the penny. The family's risin' wid us——"

"Very thrue," replied Peter, giving a sly wink at the wife—"no doubt of it."

"Risin' wid us—I tell you to have sinse, Pether—an' it's our duty to have something for the crathurs when they grow up."

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"Well, that's thruth—sure, I'm not saying against it."

"I know that; but what I say is, if we hould an we may make money. Everything, for so far, has thruv wid us, God be praised for it. There's another thing in my mind, that I'll be tellin' you some o' these days."

"I believe, Ellish, you dhrame about makin' money."

"Well an' I might do worse; when I'm dhramin' about it, I'm doin' no sin to any one. But listen, you must keep the house to-morrow while I'm at the market. Won't you, Pether?"

"An' who's to open the dhrain in the bottom below?"

"That can be done the day afther. Won't you, *abouchal?*"

"Ellish, you're a deludher, I tell you. Sweet words—sowl, you'd smooth a furze bush wid sweet words. How-an'-ever, I will keep the house to-morrow, till we see the great things you'll do wid your crockery."

Ellish's success was, to say the least of it, quite equal to her expectations. She was certainly an excellent wife, full of acuteness, industry, and enterprise. Had Peter been married to a woman of a disposition resembling his own, it is probable that he would have sunk into indolence, filth, and poverty. These miseries might have soured their tempers, and driven them into all the low excesses and crimes attendant upon pauperism. Ellish, however, had sufficient spirit to act upon Peter's natural indolence so as to excite it to the proper pitch. Her mode of operation was judiciously suited to his temper. Playfulness and kindness were the instruments by which she managed him. She knew that violence or the assumption of authority would cause a man who, like him, was stern when provoked, to react and meet her with an assertion of his rights and authority not to be trifled with. This she consequently avoided, not entirely from any train of reasoning on the subject, but from that intuitive penetration which taught her to know that the plan she had resorted to was best calculated to make him subservient to her own purposes without causing him to feel that he was governed.

Indeed, every day brought out her natural cleverness more clearly. Her intercourse with the world afforded her that felicity of understanding the tempers and dispositions of others which can never be acquired when it has not been

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bestowed as a natural gift. In her hands it was a valuable one. By degrees her house improved in its appearance, both inside and outside. From crockery she proceeded to herrings, then to salt, in each of which she dealt with surprising success. There was, too, such an air of bustle, activity, and good-humour about her, that people loved to deal with her. Her appearance was striking, if not grotesque. She was tall and strong, walked rapidly, and when engaged in fair or market, disposing of her coarse merchandise, was dressed in a short red petticoat, blue stockings, strong brogues, wore a blue cloak, with the hood turned up over her head, on the top of which was a man's hat fastened by a ribbon under her chin. As she thus stirred about, with a kind word and a joke for every one, her healthy cheek in full bloom, and her blue-grey eye beaming with an expression of fun and good-nature, it would be difficult to conceive a character more adapted for intercourse with a laughter-loving people. In fact, she soon became a favourite, and this not the less that she was as ready to meet her rivals in business with a blow as with a joke. Peter witnessed her success with unfeigned pleasure; and although every feasible speculation was proposed by her, yet he never felt that he was a mere nonentity when compared to his wife. 'Tis true he was perfectly capable of executing her agricultural plans when she proposed them, but his own capacity for making a lucky hit was very limited. Of the two she was certainly the better farmer; and scarcely an improvement took place in his little holding which might not be traced to Ellish.

In the course of a couple of years she bought him a horse, and Peter was enabled to join a neighbour who had another. Each had a plough and tackle, so that here was a little team made up, the half of which belonged to Peter. By this means they ploughed week about, until their crops were got down. Peter, finding his farm doing well, began to feel a kind of rivalship with his wife—that is to say, she first suggested the principle, and afterwards contrived to make him imagine that it was originally his own.

"The sarra one o' you, Pether," she exclaimed to him one day, "but's batin' me out an' out. Why, you're the very dickens at the farmin', so you are. Faix, I suppose, if you go

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an this way much longer, that you'll be thinkin' of another farm, in regard that we have some guineas together. Pether, did you ever think of it, *abouchal?*"

"To be sure I did, you beauty; an' amn't I in fifty notions to take Harry Neal's land, that jist lies alongside of our own?"

"Faix, an' you're right, maybe; but if it's sthrivin' agin me you are, you may give it over; I tell you I'll have more money made afore this time twelvemonth than you will."

"*Arrah,* is it jokin' you are? More money? Would you advise me to take Harry's land? Tell me that first, you phanix, an' thin I'm your man!"

"Faix, take your own coorse, *avourneen.* If you get a lase of it at a fair rint, I'll buy another horse, anyhow. Isn't that doin' the thing dacent?"

"More power to you, Ellish! I'll hould you a crown I pay you the price o' the horse afore this time twelvemonth."

"Done! The sarra be off me, but done!—an' here's Barny Dillon an' Katty Hacket to bear witness."

"Sure enough we will," said Barny, the servant.

"I'll back the misthress any money," replied the maid.

"Two to one on the masther," said the man. "Whoo! our side o' the house for ever! Come, Pether, hould up your head, there's money bid for you."

"Ellish, I'll fight for you ankle-deep," said Katty; "depend your life an me."

"In the name o' goodness, thin, it's a bargain," said Ellish; "an' at the end o' the year, if we're spared, we'll see what we'll see. We'll have among ourselves a little sup o' tay, plase goodness, an' we'll be comfortable. Now, Barny, go an' draw home thim phaties from the pits while the day's fine; and, Katty, *a colleen,* bring in some wather till we get the pig killed and scalded—it'll hardly have time to be good bacon for the big markets at Christmas. I don't wish," she continued, "to keep it back from them that we have a thrifle o' money. One always does betther when it's known that they're not strugglin'. There's Nelly Cummins, an' her customers is lavin' her, an' dalin' wid me, bekase she's goin' down in business. Ay, an' Pether, *ahagur,* it's the way o' the world!"

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"Well, but, Ellish, don't you be givin' Nelly Cummins the harsh word, or lanin' too heavily upon her, the crathur, merely in regard that she is goin' down. Do you hear, *a colleen?*"

"Indeed, I don't do it, Pether; but you know she has a tongue like a razor at times, and whin it gets loose she'd provoke St. Pether himself. Thin she's takin' to the dhrink, too, the poor misfortunate vagabone!"

"Well, well, that's no affair o' yours, or mine aither—only don't be risin' ructions and norrations wid her. You threwn a jug at her the last day you war out, an' hot the poor ould potticary as he was passin'. You see I hard that, though you kept it close from me—ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!—why you'd split if you had seen the crathur whin he fell into Pether White's brogue-*creels*, wid his heels up. But what right had she to be sthrivin' to bring away my customers afore my face? Ailey Dogherty was buyin' a crock wid me, an' Nelly shouts over to her from where she sot like a prince on her stool. 'Ailey,' says she, 'here's a betther one for three fardens less, an' another farden 'ill get you a penn'orth o' salt.' An', indeed, Ailey walks over, manely enough, an' tuck her at her word. Why, flesh an' blood couldn't bear it!"

"Indeed, an' you're raal flesh an' blood, Ellish, if that bees thrue."

"Well, but consarnin' what I mintioned a while agone—hut! the poor mad crathur, let us have no more discoorse about her—I say, that no one ever thrives so well as when the world sees that they are gettin' an, an' prosperin'; but if there's not an appearance, how will any one know whether we are prosperin' or not, barrin' they see some sign of it about us—I mane, in a quiet, rasonable way, widout show or extravagance. In the name o' goodness, thin, let us get the house brushed up, an' the outhouses dashed. A bushel or two of lime 'll make this as white as an egg widin, an' a very small expinse will get it plastered an' whitewashed widout. Wouldn't you like it, *avourneen?* Eh, Pether?"

"To be sure I'd like it. It'll give a respectful look to the house an' place."

"Ay, an' it'll bring customers—that's the main thing. People always like to come to a snug, comfortable place.

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An', plase God, I'm thinkin' of another plan that I'll soon mintion."

"An' what may that be, you skamer? Why, Ellish, you've ever an' always some skame or other in that head o' yours. For my part, I don't know how you get at them."

"Well, no matter, *acushla*, do you only back me; jist show me how I ought to go an wid them, for nobody can outdo you at sich things, an' I'll engage we'll thrive yit, always wid a blessin' an us."

"Why, to tell God's thruth, I'd bate the devil himself at plannin' out, an' bringin' a thing to a conclusion—eh, you deludher?"

"The sarra doubt of it; but takin' the other farm was the brightest thought I seen wid you yit. Will you do it, *avillish?*"

"To be sure. Didn't I say it? An' it'll be up wid the lark wid me. Hut, woman, you didn't see the half o' what's in me, yit."

"I'll buy you a hat and a pair o' stockins at Christmas."

"Will you, Ellish? Then, by the book, I'll work like a horse."

"I didn't intind to tell you, but I had it laid out for you."

"Faith, you're a beauty, Ellish. What'll we call this young chap that's comin', *acushla?*"

"Now, Pether, none o' your capers. It's time enough when the thing happens to be thinkin' o' that, glory be to God!"

"Well, you may talk as you plase, but I'll call him Pether."

"An' how do you know but he'll be a girl, you *omadhawn?*"

"Murdher alive, ay, sure enough! Faith, I didn't think o' that!"

"Well, go up now an' spake to Misther Eccles about the land; maybe somebody else ud slip in afore us, an' that wouldn't be pleasant. Here's your brave big coat, put it an—faix, it makes a man of you—gives you a *bodagh* look entirely; but that's little to what you'll be yet, wid a blessin'—a half-sir,[1] anyway."

[1] *Bodagh* is mostly used in the sense of "a churl," but not always. A "half-sir" means "nearly" a gentleman.—ED.

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In fact, Ellish's industry had already gained a character for both herself and her husband. He got credit for the assiduity and activity to which she trained him; and both were respected for their cleverness in advancing themselves from so poor a beginning to the humble state of independence they had then reached. The farm which Ellish was so anxious to secure was the property of the gentleman from whom they held the other. Being a man of sense and penetration, he fortunately saw—what, indeed, was generally well known—that Peter and Ellish were rising in the world, and that their elevation was the consequence of their own unceasing efforts to become independent, so that industry is in every possible point of view its own reward. So long as the farm was open to competition, the offers for it multiplied prodigiously, and rose in equal proportion. Persons not worth twenty shillings in the world offered double the rent which the utmost stretch of ingenuity, even with suitable capital, could pay. Newly-married couples, with nothing but the strong imaginative hopes peculiar to their country, proposed for it in a most liberal spirit. Men who had been ejected out of their late farms for non-payment of rent were ready to cultivate this at a rent much above that which, on better land, they were unable to pay. Others who had been ejected from farm after farm—each of which they undertook as a mere speculation, to furnish them with present subsistence, but without any ultimate expectation of being able to meet their engagements—came forward with the most laudable efforts. This gentleman, however, was none of those landlords who are so besotted and ignorant of their own interests as to let their lands simply to the highest bidders without taking into consideration their capital, moral character, and habits of industry. He resided at home, knew his tenants personally, took an interest in their successes and difficulties, and instructed them in the best modes of improving their farms.

Peter's first interview with him was not quite satisfactory on either side. The honest man was like a ship without her rudder when transacting business in the absence of his wife. The fact was that on seeing the high proposals which were sent in, he became alarmed lest, as he flattered himself that

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the credit of the transaction should be all his own, the farm might go into the hands of another, and his character for cleverness suffer with Ellish. The landlord was somewhat astounded at the rent which a man who bore so high a name for prudence offered him. He knew it was considerably beyond what the land was worth, and he did not wish that any tenant coming upon his estate should have no other prospect than that of gradually receding into insolvency.

"I cannot give you any answer now," said he to Peter; "but if you will call in a day or two, I shall let you know my final determination."

Peter, on coming home, rendered an account of his interview with the landlord to his wife, who no sooner heard of the extravagant proposal he made than she raised her hands and eyes exclaiming—

"Why, thin, Pether, *alanna*, was it beside yourself you wor to go for to offer a rint that no one could honestly pay! Why, man alive, it ud lave us widout house or home in no time, all out! Sure, Pether, *acushla*, where ud be the use of us or any one takin' land, barrin' they could make somethin' by it? Faix, if the gintleman had sinse, he wouldn't give the same farm to anybody at sich a rint; and for good rasons too—bekase they could never pay it, an' himself ud be the sufferer in the long run."

"Dang me, but you're the long-headedest woman alive this day, Ellish. Why, I never wanst wint into the rason o' the thing at all. But you don't know the offers he got."

"Don't I? Why, do you think he'd let the Mullins, or the Conlans, or the O'Donoghues, or the Duffys upon his land, widout a shillin' in one o' their pockets to stock it or to begin workin' it properly wid. Hand me my cloak from the pin there, an' get your hat. Katty, *avourneen*, have an eye to the house till we come back; an' if Dick Murphy comes here to get tobaccy on score, tell him I can't afford it till he pays up what he got. Come, Pether, in the name o' goodness—come, *abouchal*."

Ellish, during their short journey to the landlord's, commenced, in her own way, a lecture upon agricultural economy, which, though plain and unvarnished, contained excellent and practical sense. She also pointed out to him when to

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speak and when to be silent; told him what rent to offer, and in what manner he should offer it; but she did all this so dexterously and sweetly that honest Peter thought the new and corrected views which she furnished him with were altogether the result of his own penetration.

The landlord was at home when they arrived, and ordered them into the parlour, where he soon made his appearance.

"Well, Connell," said he, smiling, "are you come to make me a higher offer?"

"Why, thin, no, plase your honour," replied Peter, looking for confidence to Ellish; "instead o' that, sir, Ellish here——"

"Never heed me, *alanna;* tell his honour what you've to say, out o' the face. Go an, *acushla.*"

"Why, your honour, to tell the blessed thruth, the dickens a bit o' myself but had a sup in my head when I was wid your honour to-day before."

Ellish was thunderstruck at this most unexpected apology from Peter; but the fact was that the instructions which she had given him on their way had completely evaporated from his brain, and he felt himself thrown altogether upon his own powers of invention. Here, however, he was at home; for it was well known among all his acquaintances that, however he might be deficient in the management of a family when compared to his wife, he was capable, notwithstanding, of exerting a certain imaginative faculty in a very high degree. Ellish felt that to contradict him on the spot must lessen both him and herself in the opinion of the landlord—a circumstance that would have given her much pain.

"I'm sorry to hear that, Connell," said Mr. Eccles; "you bear the character of being strictly sober in your habits. You must have been early at the bottle, too, which makes your apology rather unhappy. Of all tipplers, he who drinks early is the worst and most incurable."

"Thrue for you, sir; but this only happens me wanst a year, your honour."

"Once a year! But, by-the-bye, you had no appearance of being tipsy, Peter."

"Tipsy! Bud-an-age, your honour, I was never seen

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tipsy in all my life," said Peter. "That's a horse of another colour, sir, plase your honour."

The reader must at once perceive that Peter here was only recovering himself from the effects of the injurious impression which his first admission was calculated to produce against him in the mind of his landlord.

"Tipsy! No, no, sir; but the rason of it, sir, was this: it bein' my birthday, sir, I merely tuck a sup in the mornin', in honour o' the day. It's altogether a lucky day to me, sir!"

"Why, to be sure, every man's birthday may probably be called such—the gift of existence being, I fear, too much undervalued."

"Bedad, your honour, I don't mane that at all."

"Then what do you mean, Peter?"

"Why, sir, you see, it's not that I was entirely born on this day, but partly, sir; I was marrid to Ellish here into the bargain—one o' the best wives, sir—however, I'll say no more, as she's to the fore herself. But, death alive, sir, sure when we put both conclusions together—myself bein' sich a worthy man, and Ellish such a tiptop wife—who could blame me for smellin' the bottle?—for divil a much more I did—about two glasses, sir—an' so it got up into my head a little when I was wid your honour to-day before."

"But what is the amount of all this, Peter?"

"Why, sir, you see only I was as I said, sir—not tipsy, your honour, anyway, but seein' things double or so; an' that was, I suppose, what made me offer for the farm double what I intinded. Everybody knows, sir, that the 'crathur' gives the big heart to us, anyhow, your honour."

"But you know, Peter, we entered into no terms about it. I therefore have neither power nor inclination to hold you to the offer you made."

"Faith, sir, you're not the gintleman to do a shabby turn, nor never was, nor one o' your family. There's not in all Europe——"

Ellish, who was a point-blank dealer, could endure Peter's mode of transacting business no longer. She knew that if he once got into the true spirit of applying the oil of flattery to the landlord, he would have rubbed him into a perfect froth

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ere he quitted him. She therefore took up the thread of the discourse, and finished the compliment with much more delicacy than honest Peter could have displayed.

"Thrue for you, Pether," she added; "there is not a kinder family to the poor, nor betther landlords, in the country they live in. Pether an' myself, your honour, on layin' both our heads together, found that he offered more rint for the land nor any tenant could honestly pay. So, sir, where's the use of keepin' back God's thruth—Pether, sir——"

Peter here trembled from an apprehension that the wife, in accomplishing some object of her own in reference to the land, was about to undeceive the landlord touching the lie which he had so barefacedly palmed upon that worthy gentleman for truth. In fact, his anxiety overcame his prudence, and he resolved to anticipate her.

"I'd advise you, sir," said he, with a smile of significant good-humour, "to be a little suspicious of her, for, to tell the truth, she draws the"—here he illustrated the simile with his staff—"the long bow of an odd time—faith, she does. I'd kiss the book on the head of what I tould you, sir, plase your honour. For the sacret of it is that I tuck the moisture afore she left her bed."

"Why, Pether, *alanna*," said Ellish soothingly, "what's comin' over you at all, an' me goin' to explain to his honour the outs and ins of our opinion about the land? Faix, man, we're not thinkin' about you, good or bad."

"I believe the drop has scarcely left your head yet, Peter," said the landlord.

"Bud-an-age, your honour, sure we must have our joke, anyhow—doesn't she desarve it, for takin' the words out o' my mouth?"

"Whisht, *avillish;* you're too 'cute for us all, Pether. There's no use, sir, as I was sayin', for any one to deny that when they take a farm they do it to make by it, or at the laste to live comfortably an it. That's the thruth, your honour, an' it's no use to keep it back from you, sir."

"I perfectly agree with you," said the landlord. "It is with these motives that a tenant should wish to occupy land; and it is the duty of every landlord who has his own interest

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truly at heart to see that his land be not let at such a rent as will preclude the possibility of comfort or independence on the part of his tenantry. He who lets his land above its value, merely because people are foolish enough to offer more than it is worth, is as great an enemy to himself as he is to the tenant."

"It's God's thruth, sir, an' it's nothin' else but a comfort to hear sich words comin' from the lips of a gintleman that's a landlord himself."

"Ay, an' a good one, too," said Peter; "an' kind father for his honour to be what he is. Divil resave the family in all Europe——"

"Thrue for you, *avourneen*, an' every one knows that. We wor talkin' it over, sir, betuxt ourselves, Pether an' me, an' he says, very 'cutely, that, upon second thoughts, he offered more nor we could honestly pay out o' the land; so——"

"Faith, it's as thrue as Gospel, your honour. Says I, 'Ellish, you beauty'——"

"I thought," observed Mr. Eccles, "that she sometimes drew the long bow, Peter."

"Oh, murdher alive, sir, it was only in regard of her crassin' in an' whippin' the word out o' my mouth that I wanted to take a rise out of her. Oh, bedad, sir, no; the crathur's thruth to the backbone, an' farther if I'd say it."

"So, your honour, considherin' everything, we're willin' to offer thirty shillins an acre for the farm. That rint, sir, we'll be able to pay, wid the help o' God, for sure we can do nothin' widout His assistance, glory be to His name! You'll get many that'll offer you more, your honour; but if it ud be plasin' to you to considher what manes they have to pay it, I think, sir, you'd see out o' your own sinse that it's not likely people who is gone to the bad, an' has nothin', could stand it out long."

"I wish to heaven," replied Mr. Eccles, "that every tenant in Ireland possessed your prudence and good sense. Will you permit me to ask, Mrs. Connell, what capital you and your husband can command, provided I should let you have it?"

"Wid every pleasure in life, sir, for it's but a fair question to put; an' sure, it is to God we owe it, whatever it is, plase your honour. Well, sir, if we get the land, we're able to

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stock it, an' to crop it well an' dacently; an' if your honour would allow us for certain improvements, sir, we'd run it into snug fields, by plantin' good hedges, an' gettin' up shelther for the outlyin' cattle in the hard seasons, plase your honour, and you know the farm is very naked and bare of shelter at present."

"Sowl, will we, sir, an' far more nor that, if we get it. I'll undertake, sir, to level——"

"No, Pether, we'll promise no more nor we'll do; but anything that his honour will be plased to point out to us, if we get fair support, an' that it remains on the farm afther us, we'll be willin' to do it."

"Willin'!" exclaimed Peter—"faith, whether we're willin' or not, if his honour but says the word——"

"Mrs. Connell," said their landlord, "say no more. The farm is yours, and you may consider yourselves as my tenants."

"Many thanks to you, sir, for the priference. I hope, sir, you'll not rue what you did in givin' it to us before them that offered a higher rint. You'll find, sir, wid the help o' the Almighty, that we'll pay you your rint regular an' punctual."

"Why, thin, long life, an' glory, an' benediction to your honour! Faith, it's only kind father for you, sir, to be what you are. The divil resave the family in all Europe——"

"Peter, that will do," replied the landlord; "it would be rather hazardous for our family to compete with all Europe. Go home, Peter, and be guided by your wife, who has more sense in her little finger than ever your family had either in Europe or out of it, although I mean you no offence by going beyond Europe."

"By all the books that never wor opened an' shut," replied Peter, with the intuitive quickness of perception peculiar to Irishmen, "an innocenter boy than Andy Connell never was sent acrass the wather. I proved as clear an *alibi* for him as the sun in the firmament; an' yit, bad luck to the big-wig O'Grady, he should be puttin' in his leek an' me afore the jury, jist whin I had the poor boy cleared out dacently, an' wid all honour. An' bedad, now that we're spakin' about it, I'll tell your honour the whole conclusions

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of it. You see, sir, the agint was shot one night; an' above all nights in the year, your honour, a thief of a toothache that I had kep me——"

"Pether, come away, *abouchal;* his honour knows as much about it as you do. Come, *aroon;* you know we must help to scald an' scrape the pig afore night, an' it's late now."

"Bedad, sir, she's a sweet one, this."

"Be guided by her, Peter, if you're wise; she's a wife you ought to be proud of."

"Thrue for you, sir; divil resave the word o' lie in that, anyhow. Come, Ellish—come, you deludher, I'm wid you."

"God bless your honour, sir, an' we're oblaged to you for your kindness an' patience wid the likes of us."

"I say ditto, your honour. Long life an' glory to you every day your honour rises!"

Peter, on his way home, entered into a defence of his apology for offering so high a rent to the landlord; but although it possessed both ingenuity and originality, it was, we must confess, grossly defective in those principles usually inculcated by our best ethical writers.

"Couldn't you have tould him what we agreed upon goin' up?" observed Ellish; "but instead o' that, to begin an' tell the gintleman so many lies about your bein' dhrunk, an' this bein' your birthday, an' the day we wor marrid, an'—— *Musha*, sich quare stories to come into your head!"

"Why," said Peter, "what harm's in all that whin he didn't find me out?"

"But why the sarra did you go to say that I was in the custom o' tellin' lies?"

"Faix, bekase I thought you wor goin' to let out all, an' I thought it best to have the first word o' you. What else?—but sure I brought myself off bravely."

"Well, well, *a hudh;* don't be invintin' sich things another time, or you'll bring yourself into a scrape some way or other."

"Faix, an' you needn't spake, Ellish; you can let out a nate bounce yourself whin it's to sarve you. Come now, don't run away wid the story."

"Well, if I do, it's in the way o' my business—whin I'm batin' thim down in the price o' what I'm buyin', or gettin'

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thim to bid up for anything I'm sellin'; besides, it's to advance ourselves in the world that I do it, *abouchal.*"

"Go an, go an—faix, you're like the new moon, sharp at both corners; but what matther, you beauty, we've secured the farm, at any rate, an', by this an by that, I'll show you tiptop farmin' an it."

A struggle now commenced between the husband and wife as to which of them should, in their respective departments, advance themselves with greater rapidity in life. This friendly contest was kept up principally by the address of Ellish, who, as she knew those points in her husband's character most easily wrought upon, felt little difficulty in shaping him to her own purposes. Her great object was to acquire wealth; and it mostly happens that when this is the ruling principle in life, there is usually to be found in association with it all those qualities which are best adapted to secure it. Peter, on finding that every succeeding day brought something to their gains, began to imbibe a portion of that spirit which wholly absorbed Ellish. He became worldly; but it was rather the worldliness of habit than of principle. In the case of Ellish it proceeded from both: her mind was apt, vigorous, and conceptive; her body active, her manners bland and insinuating, and her penetration almost intuitive. About the time of their entering upon the second farm, four children had been the fruit of their marriage—two sons and two daughters. These were now new sources of anxiety to their mother, and fresh impulses to her industry. Her ignorance, and that of her husband, of any kind of education, she had often, in the course of their business, bitter cause to regret. She now resolved that their children should be well instructed; and no time was lost in sending them to school the moment she thought them capable of imbibing the simplest elements of instruction.

"It's hard to say," she observed to her husband, "how soon they may be useful to us. Who knows, Pether, but we may have a full shop yit, an' they may be able to make up bits of accounts for us, poor things? Throth, I'd be happy if I wanst seen it."

"Faix, Ellish," replied Peter, "if we get an as we're doin', it is hard to say. For my own part, if I had got the

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larnin' in time, I might be a bright boy to-day, no doubt of it—could spake up to the best o' thim. I never wint to school but wanst, an' I remimber I threwn the masther into a kiln-pot, an' broke the poor crathur's arm; an' from that day to this I never could be brought a single day to school."

Peter and Ellish now began to be pointed out as a couple worthy of imitation by those who knew that perseverance and industry never fail of securing their reward. Others, however —that is to say, the lazy, the profligate, and the ignorant —had a ready solution for the secret of their success.

"Oh, my dear, she's a lucky woman, an' anything she puts her hand to prospers. Sure, she was born wid a lucky *caul*[1] an her head; an' be sure, *ahagur*, the world will flow in upon thim. There's many a neighbour about thim works their fingers to the stumps, an' yit you see they can't get an: for Ellish, if she'd throw the sweepings of her hearth to the wind, it ud come back to her in money. She was born to it, an' nothin' can keep her from her luck."[2]

In the meantime Ellish was rapidly advancing in life, while such persons were absurdly speculating upon the cause of her success. Her business was not only increased, but extended. From crockery, herrings, and salt, she advanced gradually to deal in other branches adapted to her station and the wants of the people. She bought stockings, and retailed them every market-day. By-and-by a few pieces of soap might be seen in her windows; starch, blue, potash, and candles were equally profitable. Pipes were seen stuck across each other, flanked by tape, cakes, children's books, thimbles, and bread. In fact, she was equally clever and expert in whatever she undertook. The consciousness of this, and her reputation as being "a hard honest woman," encouraged her to get a cask or two of beer and a few rolls of tobacco. Peter, when she proposed

[1] The thin membrane which sometimes covers the head of a newborn child like a cap. The parents blessed with such a rarity are considered, like the child, destined to good fortune. Cauls are much sought after by people who believe that it is lucky to get one, even by purchase

[2] The doctrine of fatalism is very prevalent among the lower orders in Ireland.

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the last two, consented only to sell them still as smuggled goods—*sub silentio*. With her usual prudence, however, she declined this.

"We have gone on that way purty far," she replied, "an' never got a touch,[1] thanks to the kindness of our neighbours that never informed an us; but now, Pether, that we're able, we had betther do everything above boord. You know the ould say, 'Long runs the fox, but he's catched at last;' so let us give up in time, an' get out a little bit o' licence."

"I don't like that at all," replied Peter; "I can't warm my heart to the licence. I'll back you in anything but that. The gauger won't come next or near us; he has thried it often, an' never made anything of it. Dang me, but I'd like to have a bit o' fun wid the gauger, to see if my hand's still ready for practice."

"Oh, thin, Pether, how can you talk that way, *asthore*? Now, if what I'm sayin' was left to yourself, wouldn't you be apt to plan it as I'm doin'?—wouldn't you, *acushla*? Throth, I know you're too 'cute an' sinsible not to do it."

"Why, thin, do you know what, Ellish—although I didn't spake out, upon my faix I was thinking of it. Divil a word o' lie in it."

"Oh, you thief o' the world, an' never to tell it to me. Faix, Pether, you're a cunnin' shaver, an' as deep as a draw-well."

"Let me alone. Why, I tell you, if I study an' lay myself down to it, I can conthrive anything. Whin I was young, many a time my poor father—God be good to him!—said that if there was any possibility of gettin' me to take to larnin', I'd be risin' out o' the ashes every mornin' like a phanix."

"But won't you hould to your plan about the licence?"

"Hould? To be sure I will. What was I but takin' a rise out o' you. I intinded it this good while, you phanix—faix, I did."

In this manner did Ellish dupe her own husband into increasing wealth. Their business soon became so extensive that a larger house was absolutely necessary. To leave that beneath whose roof she succeeded so well in all her specula-

[1] Never suffered by the excisemen.

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tions, was a point—be it of prudence or of prejudice—which Ellish could not overcome. Her maxim was, wherever you find yourself doing well, stay there. She contrived, however, to remedy this. To the old house, additional apartments were from time to time added, into which their business soon extended. When these again became too small, others were also built; so that in the course of about twenty years their premises were so extensive that the original *shebeen*-house constituted a very small portion of Peter's residence. Peter, during Ellish's progress within doors, had not been idle without. For every new room added to the house, he was able to hook in a fresh farm, in addition to those he had already occupied. Unexpected success had fixed his heart as strongly upon the accumulation of money, and the pride of rising in the world, as it was possible for a man to whom they were only adventitious feelings to experience. The points of view in which he and his wife were contemplated by the little public about them were peculiar, but clearly distinct. The wife was generally esteemed for her talents and incessant application to business; but she was not so cordially liked as Peter. He, on the other hand, though less esteemed, was more beloved by all their acquaintances than Ellish. This might probably originate from the more obvious congeniality which existed between Peter's natural disposition and the national character; for with the latter, Ellish, except good-humour, had little in common. The usual remarks upon both were—"She would buy an' sell him"—"'Twas she that made a man of him; but for all that, Pether's worth a shipload of her, if she'd give him his own way."

Every year, now that their capital was extending, added more perceptibly to their independence. Ellish's experience in the humbler kinds of business trained her for a higher line, just as boys at school rise from one form to another. She made no plunges, nor permitted Peter, who was often inclined to jump at conclusions, to make any. Her elevation was gradual and cautious; for her plans were always so seasonable and simple that every new description of business and every new success seemed to arise naturally from that which went before it.

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Having once taken out a licence, their house soon became a decent country spirit establishment; from soap, and candles, and tobacco, she rose into the full sweep of groceries; and from dealing in Connemara stockings and tape, she proceeded in due time to sell woollen and linen drapery. Her crockery was now metamorphosed into delf, pottery, and hardware; her gingerbread into stout loaves, for as Peter himself grew wheat largely, she seized the opportunity, presented by the death of the only good baker in the neighbourhood, of opening an extensive bakery.

It may be asked how two illiterate persons like Peter and Ellish could conduct business, in which so much calculation was necessary, without suffering severely by their liability to make mistakes. To this we reply—first, that we should have liked to see any person attempting to pass a bad note or a light guinea upon Ellish after nine or ten years' experience; we should like to have seen a smug clerk taking his pen from behind his ear, and after making his calculation, on inquiring from Ellish if she had reckoned up the amount, compelled to ascertain the error which she pointed out to him. The most remarkable point in her whole character was the rapid accuracy she displayed in mental calculation, and her uncommon sagacity in detecting bad money.

There is, however, a still more satisfactory explanation of this circumstance to be given. She had not neglected the education of her children. The eldest was now an intelligent boy and a smart accountant, who, thanks to his master, had been taught to keep their books by double entry. The second was little inferior to him as a clerk, though as a general dealer he was far his superior. The eldest had been principally behind the counter; whilst the younger, in accompanying his mother in all her transactions and bargain-making, had in a great measure imbibed her address and tact.

It is certainly a pleasing, and, we think, an interesting thing to contemplate the enterprise of a humble, but active, shrewd woman, enabling her to rise, step by step, from the lowest state of poverty to a small sense of independence; from this, by calling fresh powers into action, taking wider views, and following them up by increased efforts, until her *shebeen* becomes a small country public-house, until her roll of tobacco

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and a few pounds of soap and starch are lost in the well-filled drawers of a grocery shop, and her grey Connemara stockings transformed by the golden wand of industry into a country cloth warehouse. To see Peter—from the time he first harrowed part of his farm with a thorn-bush, and ploughed it by joining his horse to that of a neighbour—adding farm to farm, horse to horse, and cart to cart, until we find him a wealthy and extensive agriculturist.

Peter and Ellish were now people of consequence in the parish: the former had ceased to do anything more than superintend the cultivation of his farms; the latter still took an active part in her own business, or rather in the various departments of business which she carried on. Peter might be seen the first man abroad in the morning, proceeding to some of his farms, mounted upon a good horse, comfortably dressed in top boots, stout corduroy breeches, buff cashmere waistcoat, and blue broadcloth coat, to which in winter were added a strong frieze greatcoat, with a drab velvet collar, and a glazed hat. Ellish was also respectably dressed, but still considerably under her circumstances. Her mode of travelling to fairs or markets was either upon a common car, covered with a feather bed and quilt, or behind Peter upon a pillion. This last method flattered Peter's vanity very much; no man could ride on these occasions with a statelier air. He kept himself as erect and stiff as a poker, and brandished the thong of his loaded whip with the pride of a gentleman farmer.

'Tis true, he did not always hear the sarcastic remarks which were passed upon him by those who witnessed his good-natured vanity.

"There he goes," some labouring man on the wayside would exclaim, "a purse-proud *bodagh* upon our hands. Why, thin, does he forget that we remimber when he kept the *shebeen*-house, an' sould his smuggled tobaccy in *gits*[1] out of his pocket, for fraid o' the gauger! Sowl, he'd show a blue nose, anyway, only for the wife—'twas she made a man of him."

"Faith, an' I, for one, won't hear Pether Connell run

[1] Very small quantities.

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down," his companion would reply; "he's a good-hearted, honest man, an' oblagin' enough; an' for that matter, so is the wife—a hard, honest woman, that made what they have, an' brought herself and her husband from nothin' to somethin'."

"Thrue for you, Tim; in throth, they do desarve credit. Still, you see, here's you an' me, and we've both been slavin' ourselves as much as they were, an' yet you see how we are! However, it's their luck, an' there's no use in begrudgin' it to them."

When their children were full grown, the mother did not, as might have been supposed, prevent them from making a respectable appearance. With excellent judgment, she tempered their dress, circumstances, and prospects so well together that the family presented an admirable display of economy and a decent sense of independence. From the moment they were able to furnish solid proofs of their ability to give a comfortable dinner occasionally, the priest of the parish began to notice them; and this new intimacy, warmed by the honour conferred on one side, and by the good dinners on the other, ripened into a strong friendship. For many a long year, neither Peter nor Ellish—God forgive them—ever troubled themselves about going to their duty. They soon became, however, persons of too much importance to be damned without an effort made for their salvation. The worthy gentleman accordingly addressed them on the subject, and as the matter was one of perfect indifference to both, they had not the slightest hesitation to go to confession—in compliment to the priest. We do not blame the priest for this; God forbid that we should quarrel with a man for eating a good dinner. If we ourselves were a priest, it is very probable—nay, from the zest with which we approach a good dinner, it is quite certain—that we would have cultivated honest Peter's acquaintance, and drawn him out to the practice of that most social of virtues, hospitality. The salvation of such a man's soul was worth looking after; and indeed we find a much warmer interest felt in all churches for those who are able to give good dinners than for those poor miserable sinners who can scarcely get even a bad one.

But, besides this, there was another reason for the Rev.

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Mr. Mulcahy's anxiety to cultivate a friendship with Peter and his wife—which reason consisted in a very laudable determination to bring about a match between his own niece, Miss Granua Mulcahy, and Peter's eldest son, Dan. This speculation he had not yet broached to the family, except by broken hints and jocular allusions to the very flattering proposals that had been made by many substantial young men for Miss Granua.

In the meantime, the wealth of the Connells had accumulated to thousands; their business in the linen and woollen drapery line was incredible. There was scarcely a gentleman within many miles of them who did not find it his interest to give them his custom. In the hardware, flour, and baking concerns they were equally extensive. The report of their wealth had gone far and near, exaggerated, however, as everything of the kind is certain to be; but still there were ample grounds for estimating it at a very high amount.

Their stores were large, and well filled with many a valuable bale; their cellars well stocked with every description of spirits; and their shop, though not large in proportion to their transactions, was well filled, neat, and tastefully fitted up. There was no show, however—no empty glare to catch the eye; on the contrary, the whole concern was marked by an air of solid, warm comfort that was much more indicative of wealth and independence than tawdry embellishment would have been.

"*Avourneen*," said Ellish, "the way to deck out your shop is to keep the best of goods. Wanst the people knows that they'll get betther money-worth here than they'll get anywhere else, they'll come here, whether the shop looks well or ill. Not sayin' but every shop ought to be clane an' dacent, for there's rason in all things."

This, indeed, was another secret of their success. Every article in their shop was of the best description, having been selected by Ellish's own eye and hand in the metropolis, or imported directly from the place of its manufacture. Her periodical visits to Dublin gave her great satisfaction; for it appears that those with whom she dealt, having had sufficient discrimination to appreciate her talents and integrity, treated her with marked respect.

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Peter's farmyard bore much greater evidence of his wealth than did Ellish's shop. It was certainly surprising to reflect that by the capacity of two illiterate persons, who began the world with nothing, all the best and latest improvements in farming were either adopted or anticipated. The farmyard was upon a great scale; for Peter cultivated no less than four hundred acres of land—to such lengths had his enterprise carried him. Threshing-machines, large barns, corn-kilns, large stacks, extensive stables, and immense cow-houses, together with the incessant din of active employment perpetually going on—all gave a very high opinion of their great property, and certainly reflected honour upon those whose exertions had created such a scene about them. One would naturally suppose, when the family of the Connells had arrived to such unexpected riches, and found it necessary to conduct a system whose machinery was so complicated and extensive, that Ellish would have fallen back to the simple details of business, from a deficiency of that comprehensive intelligence which is requisite to conduct the higher order of mercantile transactions; especially as her sons were admirably qualified, by practice, example, and education, to ease her of a task which would appear one of too much difficulty for an unlettered farmer's wife. Such a supposition would be injurious to this excellent woman. So far from this being the case, she was still the moving spirit, the chief conductor of the establishment. Whenever any difficulty arose that required an effort of ingenuity and sagacity, she was able, in the homeliest words, to disentangle it so happily that those who heard her wondered that it should at all have appeared to them as a difficulty. She was everywhere. In Peter's farmyard her advice was as excellent and as useful as in her own shop. On his farms she was the better agriculturist, and she frequently set him right in his plans and speculations for the ensuing year.

She herself was not ignorant of her skill. Many a time has she surveyed the scene about her with an eye in which something like conscious pride might be seen to kindle. On those occasions she usually shook her head, and exclaimed, either in soliloquy, or by way of dialogue, to some person near her—

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"Well, *avourneen*, all's very right, an' goin' an bravely; but I only hope that when I'm gone I won't be missed!"

"Missed," Peter would reply, if he happened to hear her—"oh, upon my credit"—he was a man of too much consequence to swear "by this an' by that" now—"upon my credit, Ellish, if you die soon, you'll see the ginteel wife I'll have in your place."

"Whisht, *avourneen!* Although you're but jokin', I don't like to hear it, *avillish!* No, indeed; we wor too long together, Pether, and lived too happily wid one another, for you to have the heart to think of sich a thing!"

"No; in throth, Ellish, I would be long sarry to do it. It's displasin' to you, *achree*, an' I won't say it. God spare you to us! It was you put the bone in us; an' that's what all the country says, big an' little, young an' ould; an' God He knows it's thruth, and nothin' else."

"Indeed, no, thin, Pether, it's not altogether thruth; you desarve your full share of it. You backed me well, *acushla*, in everything, an' if you had been a dhrinkin', idle, rollickin' vagabone, what ud signify all that me or the likes o' me could do."

"Faith, an' it was you made me what I am, Ellish; you tuck the soft side o' me, you beauty; an' it's well you did, for by this—hem, upon my reputation, if you had gone to cross purposes wid me, you'd find yourself in the wrong box. An', you phanix o' beauty, you managed the childher, the crathurs, the same way—an' a good way it is, in throth."

"Pether, wor you ever thinkin' o' Father Mulcahy's sweetness to us of late?"

"No, thin, the sorra one o' me thought of it. Why, Ellish?"

"Didn't you obsarve that for the last three or four months he's full of attintions to us? Every Sunday he brings you up, an' me if I'd go, to the althar, an' keeps you there by way of showin' you respect. Pether, it's not you but your money he respects; an' I think there ought to be no respect o' persons in the chapel, anyhow. You're not a bit nearer God by bein' near the althar; for how do we know but the poorest crathur there is nearer to heaven than we are!"

"Faith, sure enough, Ellish; but what deep skame are you penethratin' now, you desaver?"

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"I'd lay my life, you'll have a proposial o' marriage from Father Mulcahy, atween our Dan an' Miss Granua. For many a day he's hintin' to us from time to time about the great offers she had; now, what's the rason, if she had these great offers, that he didn't take them?"

"Bedad, Ellish, you're the greatest headpiece in all Europe. Murdher alive, woman, what a fine counsellor you'd make. An' suppose he did offer, Ellish, what ud you be sayin' to him?"

"Why, that ud depind entirely upon what he's able to give her—they say he has money. It ud depind, too, upon whether Dan has any likin' for her or not."

"He's often wid her, I know; an' I needn't tell you, Ellish, that afore we wor spliced together I was often wid somebody that I won't mintion. At all evints, he has made Dan put the big O afore the Connell, so that he has him now full namesake to the Counsellor; an', faith, that itself ud get him a wife."

"Well, the best way is to say nothin' an' to hear nothin' till his reverence spakes out, an' thin we'll see what can be done."

Ellish's sagacity had not misled her. In a few months afterwards Father Mulcahy was asked by young Dan Connell to dine; and as he and honest Ellish were sitting together, in the course of the evening the priest broached the topic as follows—

"Mrs. Connell, I think this whisky is better than my four-year-old, that I bought at the Protestant Bishop of ——'s auction, although Dan says mine's better. Between ourselves, that Dan is a clever, talented young fellow; and if he happens upon a steady, sensible wife, there is no doubt but he will die a respectable man. But, by-the-bye, Mrs. Connell, you've never tried my whisky; and, upon my credit, you must soon, for I know your opinion would decide the question."

"Is it worth while to decide it, your reverence? I suppose the thruth is, sir, that both is good enough for any one; an' I think that's as much as we want."

Thus far she went, but never alluded to Dan, judiciously throwing the *onus* of introducing that subject upon the priest.

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"Dan says mine's better," observed Father Mulcahy; "and I would certainly give a great deal for his opinion upon that or any other subject, except theology."

"You ought," replied Ellish, "to be a betther judge of whisky nor either Dan nor me; an' I'll tell you why—you dhrink it in more places, and can make comparishment one wid another; but Dan an' me is confined mostly to our own, an' of that same we take very little, an' the less the betther for people in business, or indeed for anybody."

"Very true, Mrs. Connell! But, for all that, I won't give up Dan's judgment in anything within his own line of business, still excepting theology, for which he hasn't the learning."

"He's a good son, widout tayology—as good as ever broke the world's bread," said Peter, "glory be to God! Although, for that matther, he ought to be as well acquainted wid tayology as your reverence, in regard that he sells more of it nor you do."

"A good son, they say, Mrs. Connell, will make a good husband. I wonder you don't think of settling him in life. It's full time."

"Father, *avourneen*, we must lave that wid himself. I needn't be tellin' you that it ud be hard to find a girl able to bring what any girl ud expect Dan ought to bring."

This was a staggerer to the priest, who recruited his ingenuity by drinking Peter's health, and Ellish's.

"Have you nobody in your eye for him, Mrs. Connell?"

"Faith, I'll engage she has," replied Peter, with a ludicrous grin; "I'll venture for to say she has that."

"Very right, Mrs. Connell; it's all fair. Might one ask who she is? for, to tell you the truth, Dan is a favourite of mine, and I must make it a point to see him well settled."

"Why, your reverence," replied Peter again, "jist the one you mintioned."

"Who? I? Why, I mentioned nobody."

"An' that's the very one she has in her eye for him, plase your reverence—ha, ha, ha! What's the world widout a joke, docthor, beggin' your pardon for makin' so free wid you?"

"Peter, you're still a wag," replied the priest; "but

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seriously, Mrs. Connell, have you selected any female of respectable connections as a likely person to be a wife for Dan?"

"Indeed no, your reverence; I have not. Where could I pitch upon a girl—barrin' a Protestant, an' that ud never do—who has a fortune to meet what Dan's to get?"

The priest moved his chair a little, and drank their healths a second time.

"But you know, Mrs. Connell, that Dan needn't care so much about fortune, if he got a girl of respectable connections. He has an independence himself."

"Thrue for you, father; but what right would any girl have to expect to be supported by the hard arnin' of me an' my husband, widout bringin' somethin' forrid herself? You know, sir, that the fortune always goes wid the wife; but am I to fortune off my son to a girl that has nothin'? If my son, plase your reverence, hadn't a coat to his back or a guinea in his pocket—as, God be praised, he has both—but supposin' he hadn't, what right would he have to expect a girl wid a handsome fortune to marry him? There's Paddy Neil, your sarvant-boy; now, if Paddy, who's an honest man's son, axed your niece, wouldn't you be apt to lose your timper?"

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Connell, I think your fire's rather hot—allow me to draw back a little. Mrs. Connell, your health again!—Mr. C., your fireside!"

"Thank you, docthor; but faith I think you ought hardly to dhrink to the same fireside, bekase it appears to be rather hot for your reverence at the present time—ha, ha, ha! Jokin' still, docthor, we must be. Well, what harm! I wish we may never do worse!"

"And what fortune would you expect with a girl of genteel connections—a girl that's accomplished, we'll say in music, plain work, and Irish, vernacularly?—hem! What fortune would you be expecting with such a girl?"

"Why, docthor, *ahagur*, the only music I'd wish for my son's wife is a good timper; an' that's what their music masthers can't tache thim. The plain work, although I don't know what you mane by it, sounds well enough; an' as to Irish, whick-whackularly, if you mane our own ould tongue,

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he may get thousands that can spake it whackingly, an' nothin' else."

"You're a wealthy woman, certainly, Mrs. Connell; and what's more, I'm not surprised at it. Your health, once more, and long life to you! Suppose, however, that Dan got a fitting wife, what would you expect for a proper portion? I have a reason for asking."

"Dan, plase your reverence, will get four thousand to begin the world wid; an' as he's to expect none but a Catholic, I suppose if he gets the fourth part of that, it's as much as he ought to look for."

"A thousand pounds!—hut tut! The woman's beside herself. Why, look about you, and try where you can find a Catholic girl with a thousand pounds fortune, except in a gentleman's family, where Dan could never think of going."

"That's thrue, anyhow, your reverence," observed Peter. "A thousand pounds! Ellish, you needn't look for it. Where is it to be had out of a gentleman's family, as his reverence says, thrue enough?"

"An' now, docthor," said Ellish, "what ud you think a girl ought to bring a young man like Dan, that's to have four thousand pounds?"

"I don't think any Catholic girl of his own rank in the country could get more than a couple of hundred."

"That's one shillin' to every pound he has," replied Ellish almost instantaneously. "But, father, you may as well spake out at wanst," she continued, for she was too quick and direct in all her dealings to be annoyed by circumlocution; "you're desairous of a match between Dan an' Miss Granua?"

"Exactly," said the priest; "and what is more, I believe they are fond of each other. I know Dan is attached to her, for he told me so. But now that we have mentioned her, I say there is not a more accomplished girl of her persuasion in the parish we sit in. She can play on the bagpipes better than any other piper in the province, for I taught her myself; and I tell you that in a respectable man's wife a knowledge of music is a desirable thing. It's hard to tell, Mrs. Connell, how they may rise in the world, and get into fashionable company; so that accomplishments, you persave, are good. She can make a shirt and wash it, and she can write Irish.

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As for dancing, I only wish you'd see her at a hornpipe. All these things put together, along with her genteel connections, and the prospect of what I may be able to lave her—I say your son may do worse."

"It's not what you'd lave her, sir, but what you'd give her, in the first place, that I'd like to hear. Spake up, your reverence, an' let us know how far you will go."

"I'm afeard, sir," said Peter, "if it goes to a clane bargain atween yees, that Ellish will make you bid up for Dan. Be sharp, sir, or you'll have no chance—faix, you won't."

"But, Mrs. Connell," replied the priest, "before I spake up, consider her accomplishments. I'll undertake to say that the best-bred girl in Dublin cannot perform music in such a style, or on such an instrument as the one she uses. Let us contemplate Dan and her after marriage, in an elegant house, and full business, the dinner, and they gone up to the drawing-room. Think how agreeable and graceful it would be for Mrs. Daniel O'Connell to repair to the sofa, among a few respectable friends, and taking up her bagpipes, set her elbow a-going, until the drone gives two or three broken groans, and the chanter a squeak or two, like a child in the colic, or a cat that you had trampled on by accident. Then comes the real old Irish music, that warms the heart. Dan looks upon her graceful position, until the tears of love, taste, and admiration are coming down his cheeks. By-and-by the toe of him moves; here another foot is going; and in no time there is a hearty dance, with a light heart and a good conscience. You or I perhaps drop in to see them, and of course we partake of the enjoyment."

"Divil a pleasanter," said Peter. "I tell you, I'd like it well; an' for my own part, if the deludher here has no objection, I'm not goin' to spoil sport."

Ellish looked hard at the priest; her keen blue eyes glittered with a sparkling light, that gave decided proofs of her sagacity being intensely excited.

"All that you've said," she replied, "is very fine; but in regard o' the bagpipes, an' Miss Granua Mulcahy's squeezin' the music out o' thim—why, if it plased God to bring my son to the staff an' bag—a common beggar—

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indeed, in that case, Miss Granua's bagpipes might sarve both o' thim, an' help, maybe, to get them a night's lodgin' or so; but until that time comes, if you respect your niece, you'll burn her bagpipes, dhrone, chanther, an' all. If you are for a match, which I doubt, spake out, as I said, and say what fortune you'll pay down on the nail wid her; otherwise we're losin' our time, an' that's a loss one can't make up."

The priest, who thought he could have bantered Ellish into an alliance without pledging himself to pay any specific fortune, found that it was necessary for him to treat the matter seriously if he expected to succeed. He was certainly anxious for the match; and as he really wished to see his niece—who, in truth, was an excellent girl, and handsome—well settled, he resolved to make a stretch and secure Dan if possible.

"Mrs. Connell," said he, "I will be brief with you. The most I can give her is three hundred pounds, and even that by struggling and borrowing. I will undertake to pay it as you say—on the nail—for I am really anxious that my niece should be connected with so worthy and industrious a family. What do you say?"

"I'm willin' enough," replied Peter. "It's not asy to get that wid a Catholic girl."

"There's some thruth in what you say, *aroon*, sure enough," observed Ellish; "an' if his reverence puts another hundher to it, why, in the name of goodness, let them go together. If you don't choose that, docthor, never breathe the subject to me agin. Dan's not an ould man yit, an' has time enough to get wives *galore*."

"Come," replied the priest, "there's my hand, it's a bargain; although I must say there's no removing you from your point. I will give four hundred, hook or crook; but I'll have sad scrambling to get it together. Still, I'll make it good."

"Down on the nail?" inquired Ellish.

"Ay! ay! Down on the nail," replied the priest.

"Well, in the name o' goodness, a bargain be it," said Peter; "but, upon my credit, Ellish, I won't have the bagpipes burnt, anyhow. Faith, I must hear an odd tune now an' thin when I call to see the childher."

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"Pether, *acushla,* have sinse. Would you wish to see your daughter-in-law playin' upon the bagpipes when she ought to be mindin' her business or attendin' her childher? No, your reverence, the pipes must be laid aside. I'll have no piperly connection for a son of mine."

The priest consented to this, although Peter conceded it with great reluctance. Further preliminaries were agreed upon, and the evening passed pleasantly, until it became necessary for Mr. Mulcahy to bid them good-night.

When he was gone, Peter and Ellish talked over the matter between themselves in the following dialogue:—

"The fortune's a small one," said Ellish to her husband; "an' I suppose you wondher that I consinted to take so little."

"Sure enough, I wondhered at it," replied Peter; "but for my own part, I'd give my son to her widout a penny o' fortune, in ordher to be connected wid the priest; an' besides, she's a fine, handsome, good girl—ay, an' his fill of a wife, if she had but the shift to her back."

"Four hundher wid a priest's niece, Pether, is before double the money wid any other. Don't you know, that when they set up for themselves, he can bring the custom of the whole parish to them? It's unknown the number o' ways he can sarve them in. Sure, at stations an' weddins, wakes, marriages, and funerals, they'll all be proud to let the priest know that they purchased whatever they wanted from his niece an' her husband. Betther!—faix, four hundher from him is worth three times as much from another."

"Glory to you, Ellish!—bright an' 'cute for ever! Why, I'd back you for a woman that could buy an' sell Europe aginst the world. Now, isn't it odd that I never think of these long-headed skames?"

"Ay do you, often enough, Pether; but you keep them to yourself, *abouchal.*"

"Faith, I'm close, no doubt of it; an'—but there's no use in sayin' any more about it; you said whatsomever came into my own head consarnin' it—faith, you did, you phanix."

In a short time the marriage took place. Dan, under the advice of his mother, purchased a piece of ground, most advantageously located, as the site of a mill, whereon an

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excellent one was built; and as a good mill had been long a desideratum in the country, his success was far beyond his expectations. Every speculation, in fact, which Ellish touched, prospered. Fortune seemed to take delight either in accomplishing or anticipating her wishes. At least, such was the general opinion, although nothing could possibly be more erroneous than to attribute her success to mere chance. The secret of all might be ascribed to her good sense and her exact knowledge of the precise moment when to take the tide of fortune at its flow. Her son, in addition to the mill, opened an extensive mercantile establishment in the next town, where he had ample cause to bless the instructions of his mother, and her foresight in calculating upon the advantage of being married to the priest's niece.

Soon after his marriage the person who had for many years kept the head inn of the next town died, and the establishment was advertised for sale. Ellish was immediately in action. Here was an opportunity of establishing the second son in a situation which had enabled the late proprietor of it to die nearly the richest man in the parish. A few days, therefore, before that specified for the sale, she took her feather-bed car, and had an interview with the executors of the late proprietor. Her character was known, her judgment and integrity duly estimated, and perhaps what was the weightiest argument in her favour, her purse was forthcoming to complete the offer she had made. After some private conversation between the executors her proposal was accepted, and before she returned home the head inn, together with all its fixtures and furniture, was her property.

The second son, who was called after his father, received the intelligence with delight. One of his sisters was, at his mother's suggestion, appointed to conduct the housekeeping department and keep the bar, a duty for which she was pretty well qualified by her experience at home.

"I will paint it in great style," said Peter the younger. "It must be a head inn no longer; I'll call it a hotel, for that's the whole fashion."

"It wants little, *avourneen*," said his mother; "it was well kep'. Some paintin' an' other improvements it does want, but don't be extravagant. Have it clane an' dacent, but,

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above all things, comfortable, an' the attindance good. That's what'll carry you an—not a flourish o' paintin' outside, an' dirt, an' confusion, an' bad attindance widin. Considher, Pether, darlin', that the man who owned it last feathered his nest well in it, but never called it a hotill. Let it appear on the outside jist as your ould customers used to see it; but improve it widin as much as you can, widout bein' lavish an it, or takin' up the place wid nonsense."

"At all evints, I'll have a picture of the Liberator over the door, an' 'O'Connell' written under it. It's both our names, and, besides, it will be 'killin' two birds with one stone.'"

"No, *avourneen*. Let me advise you, if you wish to prosper in life, to keep yourself out of party work. It only stands betune you an' your business; an' it's surely wiser for you to mind your own affairs than the affairs of the nation. There's rason in everything. No man in trade has a right, widout committin' a sin, to neglect his family for politics or parties. There's Jack Cummins, that was doin' well in his groceries, till he began to make speeches, an' get up public meetins, an' write petitions; an' now he has nothin' to throuble him but politics, for his business is gone. Every one has liberty to think as they plase. We can't expect Protestants to think as we do, nor Protestants can't suppose that we ought to think as they'd wish; an' for that same rason we should make allowances on both sides, an' not be like many we know, that have their minds upset, expectin' they don't know what, instead of workin' for themselves an' their families, as they ought to do. Pether, won't you give that up, *avillish?*"

"I believe you're right, mother. I didn't see it before in that light."

"Then, Pether, darlin', lose no time in gettin' into your place—you an' Alley; an' faix, if you don't both manage it cleverly, I'll never spake to yees."

Here was a second son settled, and nothing remained but to dispose of their two daughters in marriage to the best and most advantageous offers. This, in consequence of their large fortunes, was not a matter of much difficulty. The eldest, Alley, who assisted her brother to conduct the inn, became the wife of an extensive grazier, who lived in another county. The younger, Mary, was joined to Father Mulcahy's nephew,

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not altogether to the satisfaction of the mother, who feared that two establishments of the same kind, in the same parish, supported by the same patronage, must thrive at the expense of each other. As it was something of a love-match, however, she ultimately consented.

"*Avourneen*," said she, "the parish is big enough, an' has customers enough to support them both; an' I'll engage his reverence will do what he can for both o' them."

For some time after the marriage of her youngest daughter, Mrs. Connell took a very active part in her son-in-law's affairs. He possessed neither experience nor any knowledge of business whatsoever, though he was not deficient in education, nor in capacity to acquire both. This pleased Mrs. Connell very much, who set herself to the task of instructing him in the principles of commercial life, and in the best methods of transacting business.

"The first rules," said she to him, "for you to obsarve is these: tell truth; be sober; be punctual; rise early; persavere; avoid extravagance; keep your word; an' watch your health. Next: don't be proud; give no offince; talk sweetly; be ready to oblage when you can do it widout inconvenience, but don't put yourself or your business out o' your ways to sarve anybody.

"Thirdly: keep an appearance of substance an' comfort about your place, but don't go beyant your manes in doin' it; when you make a bargain, think what correcther them you dale wid bears, an' whether or not you found them honest before, if you ever had business wid them.

"When you buy a thing, appear to know your own mind, an' don't be hummin' an' hawin', an' higglin' an' longin', as if your teeth wor watherin' afther it; but be manly, downright, an' quick; they'll then see that you know your business, an' they won't be keepin' off an' an, but will close wid you at wanst.

"Never dhrink at bargain-makin'; an' never pay money in a public-house if you can help it; if you must do it, go into an inn or a house that you know to be dacent.

"Never stay out late in a fair or market; don't make a poor mouth—on the other hand, don't boast of your wealth; keep no low company; don't be rubbin' yourself aginst your

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betthers, but keep wid your aquils. File your loose papers an' accounts; an' keep your books up to the day. Never put off anything that can be done when it ought to be done. Go early to bed; but be the last up at night, and the first in the mornin', an' there's no fear o' you."

Having now settled all her children in comfort and independence, with each a prospect of rising still higher in the world, Mrs. Connell felt that the principal duties devolving upon her had been discharged. It was but reasonable, she thought, that, after the toil of a busy life, her husband and herself should relax a little, and enjoy with lighter minds the ease for which they had laboured so long and unremittingly.

"Do you know what I'm thinkin' of, Pether?" said she one summer evening in their farmyard.

"Know, is it?" replied Peter—"some long-headed plan that none of us ud ever think of, but that will stare us in the face the moment you mintion it. What is it, you ould sprig o' beauty?"

"Why, to get a snug jauntin'-car for you an' me. I'd like to see you comfortable in your ould days, Pether. You're gettin' stiff, *ahagur*, an' will be good for nothin' by-an'-by."

"Stiff! *Arrah*, by this an' by—my reputation, I'm younger nor e'er a one o' my sons yet, you—eh?" said Peter, pausing. "Faith, then, I dunna that. Upon my credit, I think, on second thoughts, that a car ud be a mighty comfortable thing for me. Faith, I do, an' for you too, Ellish."

"The common car," she continued, "is slow an' troublesome, an' joults the life out o' me."

"By my reputation, you're not the same woman since you began to use it that you wor before, at all. Why, it'll shorten your life. The pillion's dacent enough; but the jauntin'-car! —faix, it's what ud make a fresh woman o' you—divil a lie in it."

"You're not puttin' in a word for yourself now, Pether?"

"To be sure I am, an' for both of us. I'd surely be proud to see yourself an' myself sittin' in our glory upon our own jauntin'-car. Sure, we can afford it, an' ought to have it too. Bud-an-ages! what's the rason I didn't think of it long ago?"

"Maybe you did, *acushla;* but you forgot it. Wasn't that the way wid you, Pether? Tell the thruth."

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"Why, thin, bad luck to the lie in it, since you must know. About this time twelve months—no, faix, I'm wrong, it was afore Dan's marriage—I had thoughts o' spakin' to you about it, but somehow it left my head. Upon my word, I'm in arnest, Ellish."

"Well, *avick*, make your mind asy; I'll have one from Dublin in less nor a fortnight. I can thin go about of an odd time an' see how Dan an' Pether's comin' an. It'll be a pleasure to me to advise an' direct thim, sure, as far an as well as I can. I only hope God will enable thim to do as much for their childher as He enabled us to do for them, glory be to His name!"

Peter's eye rested upon her as she spoke; a slight shade passed over his face, but it was the symptom of deep feeling and affection, whose current had run smooth and unbroken during the whole life they had spent together.

"Ellish," said he, in a tone of voice that strongly expressed what he felt, "you wor one o' the best wives that ever the Almighty gev to mortual man—you wor, *avourneen*—you wor, you wor!"

"I intind, too, to begin an' make my sowl a little," she continued. "We had so much to do, Pether, *aroon*, that, indeed, we hadn't time to think of it all along; but now that everything else is settled, we ought to think about that, an' make the most of our time while we can."

"Upon my conscience, I've strong notions myself o' the same thing," replied Peter; "an' I'll back you in that, as well as in everything else. Never fear, if we pull together, but we'll bring up the lost time—faith, we will! Sowl, if you set about it, let me see them that ud prevint your goin' to heaven!"

"Did Paddy Donovan get the bay filly's foot ased, Pether?"

"He's gone down wid her to the forge; the poor crathur was very lame to-day."

"That's right; and let Andy Murtagh bring down the sacks from Drumdough early to-morrow. That whate ought to go to the market on Thursday, an' the other stacks ought to be thrashed out off hand."

"Well, well; so it will be all done. Tare alive! if myself knows how you're able to keep an eye on everything. Come in an' let us have our tay."

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For a few months after this Ellish was perfectly in her element. The jaunting-car was procured; and her spirits seemed to be quite elevated. She paid regular visits to both her sons, looked closely into their manner of conducting business, examined their premises, and subjected every fixture and improvement, made or introduced without her sanction, to the most rigorous scrutiny. In fact, what between Peter's farm, her daughter's shop, and the establishments of her sons, she never found herself more completely encumbered with business. She had intended "to make her soul," but her time was so fully absorbed by the affairs of those in whom she felt so strong an interest that she really forgot the spiritual resolution in the warmth of her secular pursuits.

One evening about this time, a horse belonging to Peter happened to fall into a ditch, from which he was extricated with much difficulty by the labourers. Ellish, who thought it necessary to attend, had been standing for some time directing them how to proceed; her dress was rather thin, and the hour, which was about twilight, chilly, for it was the middle of autumn. Upon returning home she found herself cold, and inclined to shiver. At first she thought but little of these symptoms; for having never had a single day's sickness, she was scarcely competent to know that they were frequently the forerunners of very dangerous and fatal maladies. She complained, however, of slight illness, and went to bed without taking anything calculated to check what she felt. Her sufferings during the night were dreadful; high fever had set in with a fury that threatened to sweep the powers of life like a wreck before it. The next morning the family, on looking into her state more closely, found it necessary to send instantly for a physician.

On arriving, he pronounced her to be in a dangerous pleurisy, from which, in consequence of her plethoric habit, he expressed but faint hopes of her recovery. This was melancholy intelligence to her sons and daughters; but to Peter, whose faithful wife she had been for thirty years, it was a dreadful communication indeed.

"No hopes, docthor!" he exclaimed, with a bewildered air—"did you say no hopes, sir? Oh! no, you didn't—you couldn't say that there's no hopes!"

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"The hopes of her recovery, Mr. Connell, are but slender."

"Docthor, I'm a rich man, thanks be to God an' to——" He hesitated, cast back a rapid and troubled look towards the bed whereon she lay, then proceeded—"No matther, I'm a rich man, but if you can spare her to me, I'll divide what I'm worth in this world wid you—I will, sir; an' if that won't do, I'll give up my last shillin' to save her, an' thin I'll beg my bit an' sup through the counthry, only let me have her wid me."

"As far as my skill goes," said the doctor, "I shall, of course, exert it to save her; but there are some diseases which we are almost always able to pronounce fatal at first sight. This, I fear, is one of them. Still I do not bid you despair; there is, I trust, a shadow of hope."

"The blessin' o' the Almighty be upon you, sir, for that word! The best blessin' o' the Heavenly Father rest upon you an' yours for it!"

"I shall return in the course of the day," continued the physician; "and as you feel the dread of her loss so powerfully, I will bring two other medical gentlemen of skill with me."

"Heavens reward you for that, sir! The heavens above reward you an' them for it! Payment!—och, that signifies but little—but you an' them 'ill be well paid. Oh, docthor, *achora*, thry an' save her!—och, thry an' save her!"

"Keep her easy," replied the doctor, "and let my directions be faithfully followed. In the meantime, Mr. Connell, be a man, and display proper fortitude under a dispensation which is common to all men in your state."

To talk of resignation to Peter was an abuse of words. The poor man had no more perception of the consolations arising from a knowledge of religion than a child. His heart sank within him, for the prop on which his affections had rested was suddenly struck down from under them.

Poor Ellish was in a dreadful state. Her malady seized her in the very midst of her worldly-mindedness; and the current of her usual thoughts, when stopped by the aberrations of intellect peculiar to her illness, bubbled up, during the temporary returns of reason, with a stronger relish of the world. It was utterly impossible for a woman like her, whose

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habits of thought and the tendency of whose affections had been all directed towards the acquisition of wealth, to wrench them for ever and at once from the objects on which they were fixed. This at any time would have been to her a difficult victory to achieve; but now, when stunned by the stroke of disease, and confused by the pangs of severe suffering, tortured by a feverish pulse and a burning brain, to expect that she could experience the calm hopes of religion, or feel the soothing power of Christian sorrow, was utter folly. 'Tis true, her life had been a harmless one; her example as an industrious and enterprising member of society was worthy of imitation. She was an excellent mother, a good neighbour, and an admirable wife; but the duties arising out of these different relations of life were all made subservient to, and mixed up with, her great principle of advancing herself in the world, whilst that which is to come never engaged one moment's serious consideration.

When Father Mulcahy came to administer the rites of the Church to Ellish, he found her in a state of incoherency. Occasional gleams of reason broke out through the cloud that obscured her intellect, but they carried with them the marks of a mind knit indissolubly to wealth and aggrandisement. The same tenor of thought, and the same broken fragments of ambitious speculation, floated in rapid confusion through the tempests of delirium which swept with awful darkness over her spirit.

"Mrs. Connell," said he, "can you collect yourself? Strive to compose your mind so far as to be able to receive the aids of religion."

"Oh, oh!—my blood's boilin'! Is that—is that Father Mulcahy?"

"It is, dear. Strive now to keep your mind calm, till you prepare yourself for judgment."

"Keep up his head, Paddy—keep up his head, or he'll be smothered undher the wather an' the sludge. Here, Mike, take this rope—pull, man, pull—*manim an duowol!*—pull, or the horse will be lost! Oh, my head!—I'm boilin'—I'm burnin'!"

"Mrs. Connell, let me entreat you to remember that you are on the point of death, and should raise your heart to God for the pardon and remission of your sins."

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"Oh! father dear, I neglected that; but I intinded—I intinded—Where's Pether?—bring—bring—Pether to me!"

"Turn your thoughts to God now, my dear. Are you clear enough in your mind for confession?"

"I am, father—I am, *avourneen*. Come—come here, Pether!—Pether, I'm goin' to lave you, *asthore machree!* I could part wid them all but—but you."

"Mrs. Connell, for heaven's sake——"

"Is this—is this—Father Mulcahy? Oh, I'm ill—ill——"

"It is, dear—it is. Compose yourself, and confess your sins."

"Where's Mary? She'll neglect—neglect to lay in a stock o' linen, although I—I—Oh, father, *avourneen!* won't you pity me? I'm sick—oh, I'm very sick!"

"You are, dear—you are, God help you, very sick; but you'll be better soon. Could you confess, dear?—do you think you could?"

"Oh, this pain—this pain—it's killin' me! Pether—Pether, *a suillish machree*, have you des—have you desarted me?"

The priest, conjecturing that if Peter made his appearance she might feel soothed, and perhaps sufficiently composed to confess, called him in from the next room.

"Here's Peter," said the priest, presenting him to her view—"here's Peter, dear."

"Oh! what a load is on me!—this pain—this pain—is killin' me—won't you bring me Pether? Oh, what will I do? Who's there?"

The mental pangs of poor Peter were perhaps equal in intensity to those which she suffered physically.

"Ellish," said he, in smothered sobs—"Ellish, *acushla machree*, sure I'm wid you here; here I'm sittin' on the bed wid you, *ackora machree*."

"Catch my hand, thin. Ah, Pether! won't you pity your Ellish?—won't you pity me?—won't you pity me? Oh! this pain—this pain—is killin' me!"

"It is, it is, my heart's delight—it's killin' us both. Oh, Ellish, Ellish! I wish I was dead sooner nor see you in this agony. I ever loved you!—I ever an' always loved you, *avourneen dheelish*—but now I would give my heart's best blood if it ud save you. Here's Father Mulcahy come."

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"About the mon—about the money—Pether—what do you intind——Oh! my blood—my blood's a-fire!—Mother o' Heaven!—Oh! this pain is—is takin' me from all—ALL!—Rise me up!"

"Here, my darlin'—treasure o' my heart—here—I'm puttin' your head upon my breast—upon my breast, Ellish, *ahagur*. Marciful Virgin—Father dear," said Peter, bursting into bitter tears—"her head's like fire! Oh, Ellish, Ellish, Ellish!—but my heart's breakin' to feel this! Have marcy on her, sweet God—have marcy on her! Bear witness, Father of Heaven—bear witness, an' hear the vow of a breakin' heart. I here solemnly promise, before God, to make, if I'm spared life an' health to do it, a station on my bare feet to Lough Derg, if it plases you, sweet Father o' pity, to spare her to me this day! Oh, but the hand o' God, father dear, is terrible!—feel her brow!—oh! but it's terrible!"

"It is terrible," said the priest, "and terribly is it laid upon her, poor woman! Peter, do not let this scene be lost. Remember it."

"Oh, father dear, can I ever forget it?—can I ever forget seein' my darlin' in sich agony?"

"Pether," said the sick woman, "will you get the car ready for to-mor—to-morrow—till I look at that piece o' land that Dan bought, before he—he closes the bargain?"

"Father, jewel!" said Peter, "can't you get the world banished out of her heart? Oh, I'd give all I'm worth to see that heart fixed upon God! I could bear to part wid her, for she must die sometime; but to go wid this world's thoughts and timptations ragin' strong in her heart—mockin' God, an' hope, an' religion, an' everything!—oh! that I can't bear! Sweet Jasus, change her heart! Queen o' Heaven, have pity on her, an' save her!"

The husband wept with great sorrow as he uttered these words.

"Neither reasoning nor admonition can avail her," replied the priest; "she is so incoherent that no train of thought is continued for a single minute in her mind. I will, however, address her again. Mrs. Connell, will you make a struggle to pay attention to me for a few minutes? Are you not afraid to meet God? You are about to die!—prepare yourself for judgment."

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"Oh, father dear! I can't—I can't—I am af—afraid—Hooh!—hooh!—God! You must do somethin' for—for me! I ne-ver done anything for myself."

"Glory be to God! that she has that much sinse, anyway," exclaimed the husband. "Father, *ahagur*, I trust my vow was heard."

"Well, my dear, listen to me," continued the priest—"can you not make the best confession possible? Could you calm yourself for it?"

"Pether, *avick machree*—Pether."

"Ellish, *avourneen*, I'm here!—my darlin', I am your *vick machree*, an' ever was. Oh, father! my heart's breakin'! I can't bear to part wid her. Father of Heaven, pity us this day of throuble!"

"Be near me, Pether—stay wid me—I'm very lonely. Is this you keepin' my head up?"

"It is, it is! I'll never lave you till—till——"

"Is the carman come from Dublin wid—wid the broadcloth?"

"Father of Heaven! she's gone back again!" exclaimed the husband. "Father, jewel! have you no prayers that you'd read for her? You wor ordained for these things, an' comin' from you, they'll have more stringth. Can you do nothin' to save my darlin'?"

"My prayers will not be wanting," said the priest; "but I am watching for an interval of sufficient calmness to hear her confession, and I very much fear that she will pass in darkness. At all events, I will anoint her by-and-by. In the meantime we must persevere a little longer; she may become easier, for it often happens that reason gets clear immediately before death."

Peter sobbed aloud, and wiped away the tears that streamed from his cheeks. At this moment her daughter and son-in-law stole in, to ascertain how she was, and whether the rites of the Church had in any degree soothed or composed her.

"Come in, Denis," said the priest to his nephew; "you may both come in. Mrs. Mulcahy, speak to your mother: let us try every remedy that might possibly bring her to a sense of her awful state."

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"Is she raving still?" inquired the daughter, whose eyes were red with weeping.

The priest shook his head: "Ah, she is—she is! and I fear she will scarcely recover her reason before the judgment of heaven opens upon her!"

"Oh, thin, may the Mother of Glory forbid that!" exclaimed her daughter—"anything at all but that! Can you do nothin' for her, uncle?"

"I'm doing all I can for her, Mary," replied the priest; "I'm watching a calm moment to get her confession, if possible."

The sick woman had fallen into a momentary silence, during which she caught the bedclothes like a child, and felt them, and seemed to handle their texture, but with such an air of vacancy as clearly manifested that no corresponding association existed in her mind.

The action was immediately understood by all present. Her daughter again burst into tears; and Peter, now almost choked with grief, pressing the sick woman to his heart, kissed her burning lips.

"Father, jewel," said the daughter, "there it is, and I feared it—the sign, uncle—the sign!—don't you see her gropin' the clothes? Oh, mother, darlin', darlin'!—are we goin' to lose you for ever?"

"Ellish, *acushla oge machree!* Ellish, Ellish—won't you spake one word to me afore you go? Won't you take one farewell of me—of ME, *aroon asthore*, before you depart from us for ever?" exclaimed her husband.

"Feeling the bedclothes," said the priest, "is not always a sign of death; I have known many to recover after it."

"Husht!" said Peter, "husht!—Mary—Mary! Come here—hould your tongues! Oh, it's past!—it's past!—it's all past an' gone!—all hope's over! Heavenly Father!"

The daughter, in a paroxysm of wild grief, clasped her mother's recumbent body in her arms, and kissed her lips with a vehemence almost frantic. "You won't go, my darlin'—is it from your own Mary that you'd go?—Mary, that you loved best of all your childher!—Mary, that you always said, an' everybody said, was your own image? Oh, you won't go without one word to say you know her!"

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"For heaven's sake," said Father Mulcahy, "what do you mean?—are you mad?"

"Oh! uncle dear! don't you hear?—don't you hear?—listen, an' sure you will—all hope's gone now—gone—gone! The dead rattle!—listen!—the dead rattle's in her throat!"

The priest bent his ear a moment, and distinctly heard the gurgling noise produced by the phlegm, which is termed, with wild poetical accuracy, by the peasantry, the "dead rattle," because it is the immediate and certain forerunner of death.

"True," said the priest—"too true: the last shadow of hope is gone. We must now make as much of the time as possible. Leave the room for a few minutes, till I anoint her; I will then call you in."

They accordingly withdrew, but in about fifteen or twenty minutes he once more summoned them to the bed of the dying woman.

"Come in," said he, "I have anointed her—come in, and kneel down till we offer up a Rosary to the Blessed Virgin, under the hope that she may intercede with God for her, and cause her to pass out of life happily. She was calling for you, Peter, in your absence; you had better stay with her."

"I will," said Peter, in a broken voice; "I'll stay nowhere else."

"An' I'll kneel at the bedside," said the daughter. "She was the kind mother to me, and to us all—but to me in particular. 'Twas with me she took her choice to live when they war all striving for her. "Oh," said she, taking her mother's hand between hers, and kneeling down to kiss it, "*a Vahr dheelish!* did we ever think to see you departing from us this way—snapped away without a minute's warning! If it was a long sickness, that you'd be calm and sinsible in; but to be hurried away into eternity, and your mind dark. Oh, *Vahr dheelish*, my heart is broke to see you this way!"

"Be calm," said the priest; "be quiet till I open the Rosary."

He then offered up the usual prayers which precede its repetition, and after having concluded them, commenced what

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is properly called the Rosary itself, which consists of fifteen Decades, each Decade containing the Hail Mary repeated ten times, and the Lord's Prayer once.

In this manner the Decade goes round from one to another, until, as we have said above, it is repeated fifteen times; or, in all, the *Ave Marias* one hundred and sixty-five times, without variation. From the indistinct utterance, elevated voice, and rapid manner in which it is pronounced, it certainly is wild, and strongly impressed with the character of a mystic rite or incantation, rather than with that of a calm and humble spirit bending down in sorrow before its offended God.

When the priest repeated the first part, he paused for the response; neither the husband nor daughter, however, could find utterance.

"Denis," said he to his nephew, "do you take up the next."

His nephew complied; and with much difficulty Peter and his daughter were able to join in it, repeating here and there a word or two as well as their grief and sobbings would permit them.

The heart must indeed have been an unfeeling one to which a scene like this would not have been deeply touching and impressive. The poor dying woman reclined with her head upon her husband's bosom; her daughter knelt at the bedside, with her mother's hand pressed against her lips, she herself convulsed with sorrow; the priest was in the attitude of earnest supplication, having the stole about his neck, his face and arms raised towards heaven; the son-in-law was bent over a chair, with his face buried in his hands. Nothing could exceed the deep, the powerful expression of entreaty which marked every tone and motion of the parties, especially those of the husband and daughter. They poured an energy into the few words which they found voice to utter, and displayed such a concentration of the faculties of the soul in their wild, unregulated attitudes, and streaming, upturned eyes, as would seem to imply that their own salvation depended upon that of the beloved object before them. Their words, too, were accompanied by such expressive tokens of their attachment to her that the character of prayer was

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heightened by the force of the affection which they bore her. When Peter, for instance, could command himself to utter a word, he pressed his dying wife to his bosom, and raised his eyes to heaven in a manner that would melt any human heart; and the daughter, on joining occasionally in the response, pressed her mother's hand to her heart, and kissed it with her lips, conscious that the awful state of her parent had rendered more necessary the performance of the two tenderest duties connected with a child's obedience—prayer and affection.

When the son-in-law had finished his Decade, a pause followed, for there was none now to proceed but her husband or her daughter.

"Mary, dear," said the priest, "be a woman; don't let your love for your mother prevent you from performing a higher duty. Go on with the prayer—you see she is passing fast."

"I'll try, uncle," she replied—I'll try; but—but—it's hard, hard upon me."

She commenced, and by an uncommon effort so far subdued her grief as to render her words intelligible. Her eyes, streaming with tears, were fixed with a mixture of wildness, sorrow, and devotedness upon the countenance of her mother, until she had completed her Decade.

Another pause ensued. It was now necessary, according to the order and form of the prayer, that Peter should commence, and offer up his supplications for the happy passage from life to eternity of her who had been his inward idol during a long period. Peter knew nothing about sentiment or the philosophy of sorrow; but he loved his wife with the undivided power of a heart in which Nature had implanted her strongest affections. He knew, too, that his wife had loved him with a strength of heart equal to his own. He loved her, and she deserved his love.

The pause, when the prayer had gone round to him, was long. Those who were present at length turned their eyes towards him, and the priest, now deeply affected, cleared his voice, and simply said "Peter," to remind him that it was his duty to proceed with the Rosary.

Peter, however, instead of uttering the prayer, burst out

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into a tide of irrepressible sorrow. "Oh!" said he, enfolding her in his arms, and pressing his lips to hers, "Ellish, *ahagur machree!* sure, when I think of all the goodness, an' kindness, an' tendherness that you showed me—whin I think of your smiles upon me, whin you wanted me to do the right, an' the innocent plans you made out to benefit me an' mine! —oh! where was your harsh word, *avillish?*—where was your cowld brow or your bad tongue? Nothin' but goodness —nothin' but kindness, an' love, an' wisdom ever flowed from these lips! An' now, darlin', pulse o' my broken heart! these same lips can't spake to me—these eyes don't know me—these hands don't feel me—nor your ears doesn't hear me!"

"Is—is—it you?" replied his wife feebly—"is it—you? —come—come near me—my heart—my heart says it misses you—come near me!"

Peter again pressed her in an embrace, and in doing so, unconsciously received the parting breath of a wife whose prudence and affection had saved him from poverty.

The priest, on turning round to rebuke Peter for not proceeding with the prayer, was the first who discovered that she had died; for the grief of her husband was too violent to permit him to notice anything with much accuracy.

"Peter," said he, "I beg your pardon; let me take the trouble of supporting her for a few minutes, after which I must talk to you seriously—very seriously."

The firm, authoritative tone in which the priest spoke, together with Peter's consciousness that he had acted wrongly by neglecting to join in the Rosary, induced him to retire from the bed with a rebuked air. The priest immediately laid back the head of Mrs. Connell on the pillow, and composed the features of her lifeless face with his own hands. Until this moment none of them, except himself, knew that she was dead.

"Now," continued he, "all her cares, and hopes, and speculations touching this world are over—so is her pain; her blood will soon be cold enough, and her head will ache no more. She is dead. Grief is therefore natural; but let it be the grief of a man, Peter. Indeed, it is less painful to look upon her now than when she suffered such excessive

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agony. Mrs. Mulcahy, hear me! Oh, it's in vain! Well, well, it is but natural; for it was an unexpected and a painful death!"

The cries of her husband and daughter soon gave intimation to her servants that her pangs were over. From the servants it immediately went to the neighbours, and thus did the circle widen until it reached the farthest ends of the parish. In a short time, also, the mournful sounds of the church-bell, in slow and measured strokes, gave additional notice that a Christian soul had passed into eternity.

It is in such scenes as these that the Roman Catholic clergy knit themselves so strongly into the affections of the people. All men are naturally disposed to feel the offices of kindness and friendship more deeply when tendered at the bed of death or of sickness than under any other circumstances. Both the sick-bed and the house of death are necessarily the sphere of a priest's duty, and to render them that justice which we will ever render them when and wheresoever it may be due, we freely grant that many shining, nay, noble instances of Christian virtue are displayed by them on such occasions.

When the violence of grief produced by Ellish's death had subsided, the priest, after giving them suitable exhortations to bear the affliction which had just befallen them with patience, told Peter that as God, through the great industry and persevering exertions of her who had then departed to another world, had blessed him abundantly with wealth and substance, it was, considering the little time which had been allowed her to repent in a satisfactory manner for her transgressions, his bounden and solemn duty to set aside a suitable portion of that wealth for the delivery of her soul from purgatory, where, he trusted, in the mercy of God, it was permitted to remain.

"Indeed, your reverence," replied Peter, "it wasn't necessary to mintion it, considherin' the way she was cut off from among us, widout even time to confess."

"But blessed be God," said the daughter, "she received the ointment at any rate, and that of itself would get her to purgatory."

"And I can answer for her," said Peter, "that she in-

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tended, as soon as she'd get everything properly settled for the childher, to make her sowl."

"Ah! good intentions!" said the priest. "Did you never hear that the floor of hell is paved with good intentions? I, however, have forewarned you of your duty, and must now leave the guilt or the merit of relieving her departed spirit upon you and the other members of her family, who are all bound to leave nothing undone that may bring her from pain and fire to peace and happiness."

"Och, och! *asthore, asthore!* you're lyin' there—an', oh, Ellish, *avourneen,* could you think that I—*I*—would spare money—trash—to bring you to glory wid the angels o' heaven! No, no, father dear. It's good, an' kind, an' thoughtful of you to put it into my head; but I didn't intind to neglect or forget it. Oh, how will I live wantin' her, father? When I rise in the mornin', *avillish,* where'll be your smile and your voice? We won't hear your step, nor see you as we used to do, movin' pleasantly about the place. No—you're gone, *avourneen*—gone—an' we'll see you and hear you no more!"

His grief was once more about to burst forth, but the priest led him out of the room, kindly chid him for the weakness of his immoderate sorrow, and after making arrangements about the celebration of mass for the dead, pressed his hand, and bade the family farewell.

The death of Ellish excited considerable surprise and much conversation in the neighbourhood. Every point of her character was discussed freely, and the comparisons instituted between her and Peter were anything but flattering to the intellect of her husband.

"An' so Ellish is whipped off, Larry," said a neighbour to one of Peter's labouring men. "Faix, an' the best feather in their wing is gone."

"Ay, sure enough, Risthard, you may say that. It was her cleverness made them what they are. She was the best manager in the three kingdoms."

"Ah, she was the woman could make a bargain. I only hope she hasn't brought the luck o' the family away wid her!"

"Why, man alive, she made the sons and daughters as

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clever as herself—put them up to everything. Indeed, it's quare to think of how that one woman brought them an, an' ris them to what they are!"

"They shouldn't forget themselves as they're doin', thin; for betune you an' me, they're as proud as Turks, an' God He sees it ill becomes them—sits very badly on them itself, when everybody knows that their father an' mother begun the world wid a bottle of private whisky an' half a pound of smuggled tobaccy."

"Poor Pether will break his heart, anyway. Oh, man, but she was the good wife. I'm livin' wid them goin' an seven year, an' never hard a cross word from the one to the other. It's she that had the sweet tongue all out, an' did manage him; but, afther all, he was worth the full o' the *Royal George* of her. Many a time when some poor crathur ud come to ax whisky on score to put over[1] some o' their friends, or for a weddin', or a christenin', maybe, an' when the wife ud refuse it, Pether ud send what whisky they wanted afther them, widout lettin' her know anything about it. An', indeed, he never lost anything by that; for if they wor to sell their cow he should be ped, in regard of the kindly way he gave it to them."

"Well, we'll see how they'll manage now that she's gone. But Pether an' the youngest daughter, Mary, is to be pitied."

"The sarra much; barrin' that they'll miss her at first from about the place. You see she has left them above the world, an' full of it. Wealth an' substance enough may they thank her for; an' that's very good comfort for sorrow, Risthard."

"Faith, sure enough, Larry. There's no lie in that, anyway!"

"*Awouh!* Lie! I have you about it."

Such was the view which had been taken of their respective characters through life. Yet notwithstanding that the hearts of her acquaintances never warmed to her—to use a significant expression current among the peasantry—as they

[1] To put over—the corpse of a friend. That is, to be drunk at the wake and funeral.

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did to Peter, still she was respected almost involuntarily for the indefatigable perseverance with which she pushed forward her own interests through life. Her funeral was accordingly a large one; and the conversation which took place at it, turning, as it necessarily did, upon her extraordinary talents and industry, was highly to the credit of her memory and virtues. Indeed, the attendance of many respectable persons, of all creeds and opinions, gave ample proof that the qualities she possessed had secured for her general respect and admiration.

Poor Peter, who was an object of great compassion, felt himself completely crushed by the death of his faithful partner. The reader knows that he had hitherto been a sober, and, owing to Ellish's prudent control, an industrious man. To thought or reflection he was not, however, accustomed; he had, besides, never received any education; if his morals were correct, it was because a life of active employment kept him engaged in pursuits which repressed immorality, and separated him from those whose society and influence might have been prejudicial to him. He had scarcely known calamity, and when it occurred he was prepared for it neither by experience nor a correct view of moral duty. On the morning of his wife's funeral, such was his utter prostration both of mind and body that even his own sons, in order to resist the singular state of collapse into which he had sunk, urged him to take some spirits. He was completely passive in their hands, and complied. This had the desired effect, and he found himself able to attend the funeral. When the friends of Ellish, after the interment, assembled, as is usual, to drink and talk together, Peter, who could scarcely join in the conversation, swallowed glass after glass of punch with great rapidity. In the meantime the talk became louder and more animated; the punch, of course, began to work, and as they sat long, it was curious to observe the singular blending of mirth and sorrow, singing and weeping, laughter and tears which characterised this remarkable scene. Peter, after about two hours' hard drinking, was not an exception to the influence of this trait of national manners. His heart, having been deeply agitated, was the more easily brought under the effects of contending emotions. He was naturally mirthful, and when

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intoxication had stimulated the current of his wonted humour, the influence of this and his recent sorrow produced such an anomalous commixture of fun and disconsolation as could seldom, out of Ireland, be seen checkering the mind of one individual.

It was in the midst of this extraordinary din that his voice was heard commanding silence in its loudest and best humoured key.

"Hould yer tongues," said he; "bad win to yees, don't you hear me wantin' to sing. Whisht wid yees. Hem—och —'Rise up?' Why, thin, Phil Callaghan, you might thrate me wid more dacency, if you had gumption in you; I'm sure no one has a better right to sing first in this company nor myself; an' what's more, I will sing first. Hould your tongues! Hem!"

He accordingly commenced a popular song, the air of which, though simple, was touchingly mournful.

"Och, rise up, Willy Reilly, an' come alongst wid me,
I'm goin' for to go wid you, and lave this coun-ter-ee;
I'm goin' to lave my father, his castles and free lands—
An' away wint Willy Reilly, an' his own Colleen Bawn.

"Och, they wint o'er hills and mountains, and valleys that was fair,
An' fled before her father, as you may shortly hear;
Her father followed afther wid a well-chosen armed band,
Och, an' taken was poor Reilly, an' his own Colleen Bawn."

The simple pathos of the tune, the affection implied by the words, and probably the misfortune of Willy Reilly, all overcame him. He finished the second verse with difficulty, and on attempting to commence a third he burst into tears.

"*Colleen bawn! colleen bawn!*" he exclaimed—"she's lyin' low that was my *colleen bawn!* Oh, will yees hould your tongues, an' let me think of what has happened me? She's gone—Mary, *avourneen*, isn't she gone from us? I'm alone, an' I'll be always lonely. Who have I now to comfort me? I know I have good childher, neighbours; but none o' them—all of them, if they wor ten times as many—isn't aquil to her that's in the grave. Her hands won't be about me—there was tindherness in their very touch. An' of a Sunday mornin'

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how she'd tie an my handkerchy, for I never could rightly tie it an myself, the knot was ever an' always too many for me; but, och, och, she'd tie it an so snug and purty wid her own hands that I didn't look the same man! The same song was her favourite. Here's your healths; an' sure it's the first time ever we wor together that she wasn't wid us—but now, *avillish*, your voice is gone—you're silent an' lonely in the grave; an' why shouldn't I be sarry for the wife o' my heart that never angered me? Why shouldn't I? Ay, Mary, *asthore machree*, good right you have to cry afther her; she was the kind mother to you; her heart was fixed in you; there's her fatures on your face—her very eyes, an' fair hair, too; an' I'll love you, *achora*, ten times more nor ever, for her sake. Another favourite song of hers—God rest her—was 'Bryan O'Lynn.' Throth an' I'll sing it, so I will, for if she was livin' she'd like it.

'Och, Brian O'Lynn, he had milk an' male,
A two-lugged porringer wantin' a tail.'

Och, my head's through other! The sarry wan o' me, I bleeve, but's out o' the words; or, as they say, there's a hole in the ballad. Send round the punch, will yees? By the hole o' my coat, Parra Gastha, I'll whale you widin an inch of your life if you don't dhrink. Send round the punch, Dan; an' give us a song, Parra Gastha. *Arrah*, Paddy, do you remimber —ha, ha, ha!—upon my credit, I'll never forget it—the fun we had catchin' Father Soolaghan's horse the day he gave his shirt to the sick man in the ditch. The Lord rest his sowl in glory—ha, ha, ha!—I'll never forget it. Paddy, the song, you thief!"

"No; but tell them about that, Misther Connell."

"Throth, an' I will; but don't be Mistherin' me. Faith, this is the height o' good punch. You see—ha, ha, ha—you see, it was one hard summer afore I was married to Ellish—*mavourneen*, that you war, *asthore!* Och, och, we are parted at last! Upon my sowl, my heart's breakin', breakin' (*weeps*); an' no wondher! But as I was sayin'—all your healths!—faith, it is tip-top punch that—the poor man fell sick of a faver, an' sure enough, when it was known what ailed him, the neighbours built a little shed on the roadside for him, in regard

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that every one was afeard to let him into their place. Howsomever—ha, ha, ha!—Father Soolaghan was one day ridin' past upon his horse, an' seein' the crathur lyin' undher the shed, an' a wishp o' sthraw, he pulls bridle, an' puts the spake an the poor sthranger. So, begad, it came out that the neighbours were very kind to him, an' used to hand over whatsomever they thought best for him from the back o' the ditch as well as they could.

"'My poor fellow,' said the priest, 'you're badly off for linen.'

"'Thrue for you, sir,' said the sick man. 'I never longed for anything so much in my life as I do for a clane shirt an' a glass o' whisky.'

"'The divil a glass o' whisky I have about me, but you shall have the clane shirt, you poor compassionate crathur,' said the priest, stretchin' his neck up an' down, to make sure there was no one comin' on the road—ha, ha, ha!

"Well an' good—'I have three shirts,' says his reverence, 'but I have only one o' them an me, an' that you shall have.'

"So the priest peels himself on the spot, an' lays his black coat and waistcoat afore him acrass the saddle, thin takin' off his shirt, he threwn it acrass the ditch to the sick man. Whether it was the white shirt or the black coat danglin' about the horse's neck, the divil a one o' myself can say, but, anyway, the baste tuck fright, an made off wid Father Soolaghan, in the state I'm tellin' yees, upon his back—ha, ha, ha!

"Parra Gastha, here, an' I war goin' up at the time to do a little in the distillin' way for Tom Duggan of Aidinasamlagh, an' seen what was goin' an. So off we set, an' we splittin' our sides laughin'—ha, ha, ha!—at the figure the priest cut. However, we could do no good, an' he never could pull up the horse till he came full flight to his own house, opposite the pound there below, and the whole town in convulsions when they seen him. We gother up his clothes, an' brought them home to him; an' a good piece o' fun we had wid him, for he loved the joke as well as any man. Well, he was the good an' charitable man, the same Father Soolaghan; but so simple that he got himself into

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fifty scrapes—God rest him! Och, och, she's lyin' low that often laughed at that, an' I'm here—ay, I have no one—no one that ud show me sich a warm heart as she would (*weeps*). However, God's will be done. I'll sing yees a song she liked.

'Och, Brian O'Lynn, he had milk an' male,
A two-lugged porringer wantin' a tail.'

Musha, I'm out agin—ha, ha, ha! Why, I bleeve there's *pishthrogues* an me, or I'd remimber it. Bud-an-age, dhrink all of yees. Lie into the liquor, I say; don't spare it. Here, Mike, send us up another gallon. Faith, we'll make a night of it.

'Och, three maidens a milkin' did go,
An' three maidens a-milkin' did go;
An' the winds they blew high,
An' the winds they blew low,
An' they dashed their milkin' pails to an' fro.'

All your healths, childher! Neighbours, all your healths! Don't spare what's before yees. It's long since I tuck a jorum myself, an—come, I say, plase God, we'll often meet this way, so we will. Faith, I'll take a sup from this forrid, wid a blessin'. Dhrink, I say, dhrink!"

By the time he had arrived at this pitch he was able to engross no great portion either of the conversation or attention. Almost every one present had his songs, his sorrows, his laughter, or his anecdotes, as well as himself. Every voice was loud, and every tongue busy. Intricate and entangled was the talk, which on the present occasion presented a union of all the extremes which the lights and shadows of the Irish character alone could exhibit under such a calamity as that which brought the friends of the deceased together.

Peter literally fulfilled his promise of taking a jorum in future. He was now his own master; and as he felt the loss of his wife deeply, he unhappily had recourse to the bottle to bury the recollection of a woman whose death left a chasm in his heart which he thought nothing but the whisky could fill up.

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His transition from a life of perfect sobriety to one of habitual, nay, of daily intoxication was immediate. He could not bear to be sober; and his extraordinary bursts of affliction, even in his cups, were often calculated to draw tears from the eyes of those who witnessed them. He usually went out in the morning with a flask of whisky in his pocket, and sat down to weep behind a ditch—where, however, after having emptied his flask, he might be heard at a great distance singing the songs which Ellish in her lifetime was accustomed to love. In fact, he was generally pitied; his simplicity of character, and his benevolence of heart, which was now exercised without fear of responsibility, made him more a favourite than he ever had been. His former habits of industry were thrown aside; as he said himself, he hadn't heart to work; his farms were neglected, and but for his son-in-law, would have gone to ruin. Peter himself was sensible of this.

"Take them," said he, "into your own hands, Denis—for me, I'm not able to do anything more at them; she that kep' me up is gone, an' I'm broken down. Take them—take them into your own hands. Give me my bed, bit, an' sup, an' that's all I want."

Six months produced an incredible change in his appearance. Intemperance, whilst it shattered his strong frame, kept him in frequent exuberance of spirits; but the secret grief preyed on him within. Artificial excitement kills, but it never cures; and Peter, in the midst of his mirth and jollity, was wasting away into a shadow. His children, seeing him go down the hill of life so rapidly, consulted among each other on the best means of winning him back to sobriety. This was a difficult task, for his powers of bearing liquor were almost prodigious. He has often been known to drink so many as twenty-five and sometimes thirty tumblers of punch without being taken off his legs or rendered incapable of walking about. His friends, on considering who was most likely to recall him to a more becoming life, resolved to apply to his landlord—the gentleman whom we have already introduced to our readers. He entered warmly into their plan, and it was settled that Peter should be sent for, and induced, if possible, to take an oath against

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liquor. Early the following day a liveried servant came down to inform him that his master wished to speak with him.

"To be sure," said Peter; "divil resave the man in all Europe I'd do more for than the same gintleman, if it was only on account of the regard he had for her that's gone. Come, I'll go wid you in a minute."

He accordingly returned with the flask in his hand, saying, "I never thravel widout a pocket-pistol, John. The times, you see, is not overly safe, an' the best way is to be prepared —ha, ha, ha! Och, och! It houlds three half-pints."

"I think," observed the servant, "you had better not taste that till after your return."

"Come away, man," said Peter; "we'll talk upon it as we go along. I couldn't do really widout it. You hard that I had lost Ellish?"

"Yes," replied the servant, "and I was very sorry to hear it."

"Did you attend the berrin?"

"No, but my master did," replied the man; "for, indeed, his respect for your wife was very great, Mr. Connell."

This was before ten o'clock in the forenoon, and about one in the afternoon a stout countryman was seen approaching the gentleman's house, with another man bent round his neck, where he hung precisely as a calf hangs round the shoulders of a butcher when he is carrying it to his stall.

"Good heavens!" said the owner of the mansion to his lady, "what has happened Smith, my dear? Is he dead?"

"Dead!" said his lady, going in much alarm to the drawing-room window—"I protest I fear so, Frank. He is evidently dead! For God's sake go down and see what has befallen him!"

Her husband went hastily to the hall-door, where he met Peter with his burden.

"In the name of heaven, what has happened, Connell?—what is the matter with John? Is he living or dead?"

"First, plase your honour, as I have him on my shouldhers, will you tell me where his bed is?" replied Peter. "I may as well lave him snug, as my hand's in, poor fellow. The devil's bad head he has, your honour. Faith, it's a burnin'

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shame, so it is, an' nothin' else—to be able to bear so little!"

The lady, children, and servants were now all assembled about the dead footman, who hung, in the meantime, very quietly round Peter's neck.

"Gracious heaven! Connell, is the man dead?" she inquired.

"Faith, thin, he is, ma'am, for a while; but, upon my credit, it's a burnin' shame, so it is——"

"The man is drunk, my dear," said her husband—"he's only drunk."

"A burnin' shame, so it is—to be able to bear no more nor about six glasses, an' the whisky good, too. Will you ordher one o' thim to show me his bed, ma'am, if you plase," continued Peter, "while he's an me? It 'ill save throuble."

"Connell is right," observed his landlord. "Gallagher, show him John's bedroom."

Peter accordingly followed another servant, who pointed out his bed, and assisted to place the vanquished footman in a somewhat easier position than that in which Peter had carried him.

"Connell," said his landlord, when he returned, "how did this happen?"

"Faith, thin, it's a burnin' shame," said Connell, "to be able only to bear——"

"But how did it happen? for he has been hitherto a perfectly sober man."

"Faix, plase your honour, asy enough," replied Peter. "He begun to lecthur me about dhrinkin', so says I, 'Come an' sit down behind the hedge here, an' we'll talk it over between us;' so we went in, the two of us, a-back o' the ditch, an' he began to advise me agin dhrink, an' I began to tell him about her that's gone, sir. Well, well! och, och! no matther!—So, sir, one story, an' one pull from the bottle, brought on another, for divil a glass we had at all, sir. Faix, he's a tindher-hearted boy, anyhow; for as myself began to let the tears down whin the bottle was near out, divil resave the morsel of him but cried afther poor Ellish as if she had been his mother—faix, he did! an' it won't

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be the last sup we'll have together, plase goodness! But the best of it was, sir, that the dhrunker he got, he abused me the more for dhrinkin'. Oh, thin, but he's the pious boy when he gets a sup in his head! Faix, it's a pity ever he'd be sober, he talks so much scripthur an' devotion in his liquor!"

"Connell," said the landlord, "I am exceedingly sorry to hear that you have taken so openly and inveterately to drink as you have done ever since the death of your admirable wife. This, in fact, was what occasioned me to send for you. Come into the parlour. Don't go, my dear; perhaps your influence may also be necessary. Gallagher, look to Smith, and see that every attention is paid him, until he recovers the effects of his intoxication."

He then entered the parlour, where the following dialogue took place between him and Peter:—

"Connell, I am really grieved to hear that you have become latterly so incorrigible a drinker; I sent for you to-day with the hope of being able to induce you to give it up."

"Faix, your honour, it's jist what I'd expect from your father's son—kindness, an' dacency, an' devotion wor always among yees. Divil resave the family in all Europe I'd do so much for as the same family."

The gentleman and lady looked at each other, and smiled. They knew that Peter's blarney was no omen of their success in the laudable design they contemplated.

"I thank you, Peter, for your good opinion; but, in the meantime, allow me to ask what can you propose to yourself by drinking so incessantly as you do?"

"What do I propose to myself by dhrinkin', is it? Why, thin, to banish grief, your honour. Surely you'll allow that no man has rason to complain who's able to banish the thief for two shillins a day. I reckon the whisky at first cost, so that it doesn't come to more nor that at the very outside."

"That is taking a commercial view of affliction, Connell; but you must promise me to give up drinking."

"Why, thin, upon my credit, your honour astonishes me. Is it to give up banishin' grief? I have a regard for you, sir, for many a dalins we had together; but for all that, faix, I'd be miserable for no man, barrin' for her that's gone. If I'd

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be so to oblage any one, I'd do it for your family; for divil resave the family in all Europe——"

"Easy, Connell—I am not to be palmed off in that manner. I really have a respect for the character which you bore, and wish you to recover it once more. Consider that you are disgracing yourself and your children by drinking so excessively from day to day—indeed, I am told almost from hour to hour."

"Augh! don't believe the half o' what you hear, sir. Faith, somebody has been dhrawin' your honour out. Why, I'm never dhrunk, sir—faith, I'm not."

"You will destroy your health, Connell, as well as your character; besides, you are not to be told that it is a sin, a crime against God, and an evil example to society."

"Show me the man, plase your honour, that ever seen me incapable. That's the proof o' the thing."

"But why do you drink at all? It is not necessary."

"An' do you never taste a dhrop yourself, sir, plase your honour? I'll be bound you do, sir, raise your little finger of an odd time, as well as another. Eh, ma'am? That's comin' close to his honour! An' faix, small blame to him; an' a *weeshy* sup o' the wine to the misthress herself, to correct the tindherness of her delicate appetite."

"Peter, this bantering must not pass. I think I have a claim upon your respect and deference. I have uniformly been your friend, and the friend of your children and family, but more especially of your late excellent and exemplary wife."

"Before God an' man, I acknowledge that, sir—I do—I do. But, sir, to spake sarious—it's thruth, ma'am, downright—to spake sarious, my heart's broke, an' every day it's breakin' more an' more. She's gone, sir, that used to manage me; an' now I can't turn myself to anything, barrin' the dhrink—God help me!"

"I honour you, Connell, for the attachment which you bear towards the memory of your wife, but I utterly condemn the manner in which you display it. To become a drunkard is to disgrace her memory. You know it was a character she detested."

"I know it all, sir, an' that you have thruth an' rason on your side; but, sir, you never lost a wife that you loved; an'

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long may you be so, I pray the Heavenly Father this day! Maybe if you did, sir, plase your honour, that, wid your heart sinkin' like a stone widin you, you'd thry whether or not something couldn't rise it. Sir, only for the dhrink I'd be dead."

"There I totally differ from you, Connell. The drink only prolongs your grief, by adding to it the depression of spirits which it always produces. Had you not become a drinker, you would long before this have been once more a cheerful, active, and industrious man. Your sorrow would have worn away gradually, and nothing but an agreeable melancholy—an affectionate remembrance of your excellent wife—would have remained. Look at other men."

"But where's the man, sir, had sich a wife to grieve for as she was? Don't be hard on me, sir. I'm not a dhrunkard. It's thrue I dhrink a great dale; but thin I can bear a great dale, so that I'm never incapable."

"Connell," said the lady, "you will break down your constitution, and bring yourself to an earlier death than you would otherwise meet."

"I care very little, indeed, how soon I was dead—not makin' you, ma'am, an ill answer."

"Oh, fie, Connell, for you, a sensible man and a Christian, to talk in such a manner!"

"Throth, thin, I don't, ma'am. She's gone, an' I'd be glad to folly her as soon as I could. Yes, *asthore*, you're departed from me! an' now I'm gone asthray—out o' the right, an' out o' the good! Oh, ma'am," he proceeded, whilst the tears rolled fast down his cheeks, "if you knew her—her last words too—Oh, she was—she was—but where's the use o' sayin' what she was?—I beg your pardon, ma'am—your honour, sir, 'll forgive my want o' manners; sure, I know it's bad breedin', but I can't help it."

"Well, promise," said his landlord, "to give up drink. Indeed, I wish you would take an oath against it; you are a conscientious man, and I know would keep it, otherwise I should not propose it, for I discountenance such oaths generally. Will you promise me this, Connell?"

"I'll promise to think of it, your honour—aginst takin' a sartin quantity, at any rate."

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"If you refuse it, I'll think you are unmindful of the good feeling which we have ever shown your family."

"What?—do you think, sir, I'm ungrateful to you? That's a sore cut, sir, to make a villain o' me. Where's the book?—I'll swear this minute. Have you a Bible, ma'am?—I'll show you that I'm not mane, anyway."

"No, Connell, you shall not do it rashly; you must be cool and composed; but go home, and turn it in your mind," she replied, "and remember that it is the request of me and my husband for your own good."

"Neither must you swear before me," said his landlord, "but before Mr. Mulcahy, who, as it is an oath connected with your moral conduct, is the best person to be present. It must be voluntary, however. Now, good-bye, Connell, and think of what we said; but take care never to carry home any of my servants in the same plight in which you put Smith to-day."

"Faix, thin, sir, he had no business, wid your honour's livery upon his back, to begin lecthurin' me agin dhrinkin' as he did. We may all do very well, sir, till the timptation crasses us—but that's what thries us. It thried him, but he didn't stand it—faix, he didn't!—ha, ha, ha! Good mornin', sir—God bless you, ma'am! Divil resave the family in all Europe——"

"Good morning, Connell—good morning! Pray remember what we said."

Peter, however, could not relinquish the whisky. His sons, daughters, friends, and neighbours all assailed him, but with no success. He either bantered them in his usual way, or reverted to his loss, and sank in sorrow. This last was the condition in which they found him most intractable; for a man is never considered to be in a state that admits of reasoning or argument when he is known to be pressed by strong gushes of personal feeling. A plan at length struck Father Mulcahy, which he resolved to put into immediate execution.

"Peter," said he, "if you do not abandon drink, I shall stop the masses which I'm offering up for the repose of your wife's soul, and I will also return you the money I received for saying them."

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This was perhaps the only point on which Peter was accessible. He felt staggered at such an unexpected intimation, and was for some time silent.

"You will then feel," added the priest, "that your drunkenness is prolonging the sufferings of your wife, and that she is as much concerned in your being sober as you are yourself."

"I will give in," replied Peter; "I didn't see the thing in that light. No—I will not be drunk; but if I swear aginst it, you must allow me a rasonable share every day, an' I'll not go beyant it, of coorse. The thruth is I'd die soon if I gev it up altogether."

"We have certainly no objection against that," said the priest, "provided you keep within what would not injure your health or make you tipsy. Your drunkenness is not only sinful but disreputable; besides, you must not throw a slur upon the character of your children, who hold respectable and rising situations in the world."

"No," said Peter, in a kind of soliloquy, "I'd lay down my life, *avourneen*, sooner nor I'd cause you a minute's sufferin'. Father Mulcahy, go an wid the masses. I'll get an oath drawn up, an' whin it's done, I'll swear to it. I know a man that'll do it for me."

The priest then departed, quite satisfied with having accomplished his object; and Peter, in the course of that evening, directed his steps to the house of the village schoolmaster, for the purpose of getting him to "draw up" the intended oath.

"Misther O'Flaherty," said he, "I'm comin' to ax a requist of you, an' I hope you'll grant it to me. I brought down a sup in this flask, an' while we're takin' it we can talk over what I want."

"If it be anything widin the circumference of my power, set it down, Misther Connell, as already operated upon. I'd drop a pen to no man at keepin' books by double enthry, which is the Italian method invinted by Pope Gregory the Great. The three sets bear a theological ratio to the three states of a thrue Christian. 'The waste-book,' says Pope Gregory, 'is this world, the journal is purgatory, an' the ledger is heaven. Or it may be compared,' he says, in the priface of the work, 'to the three states of the Catholic

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Church—the Church Militant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Triumphant.' The larnin' of that man was beyant the reach of credibility."

"*Arrah*, have you a small glass, masther? You see, Misther O'Flaherty, it's consarnin' purgatory, this that I want to talk about."

"Nancy, get us a glass—oh, here it is! Thin, if it be, it's a wrong enthry in the journal."

"Here's your health, masther!—not forgettin' you, Mrs. O'Flaherty. No, indeed, thin, it's not in the journal, but an oath I'm goin' to take aginst liquor."

"Nothin' is asier to post than it is. We must enter it under the head of—let me see!—it must go in the spirit account, undher the head of Profit an' Loss. Your good health, Mr. Connell! Nancy, I drink to your improvement in imperturbability! Yes, it must be enthered undher the——"

"Faix, undher the rose, I think," observed Peter; "don't you know the smack of it? You see, since I tuck to it, I like the smell o' what I used to squeeze out o' the barley myself long ago. Misther O'Flaherty, I only want you to dhraw up an oath aginst liquor for me; but it's not for the books, good or bad. I promised to Father Mulcahy that I'd do it. It's regardin' my poor Ellish's sowl in purgatory."

"Nancy, hand me a slate an' cutter. Faith, the same's a provident resolution; but how is it an' purgatory concatenated?"

"The priest, you see, won't go an wid the masses for her till I take the oath."

"That's but wake logic, if you ped him for thim."

"Faix, an' I did—an' well, too. But about the oath? Have you the pencil?"

"I have; jist lave the thing to me."

"Asy, masther—you don't undherstand it yit. Put down two tumblers for me at home."

"How is that, Misther Connell? It's mysterious, if you're about to swear *aginst* liquor!"

"I am. Put down, as I said, two tumblers for me at home. Are they down?"

"They are down; but——"

"Asy!—very good! Put down two more for me at Dan's. Let me see!—two more behind the garden. Well!—put

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down one at Father Mulcahy's; two more at Frank Carroll's, of Kilclay. How many's that?"

"Nine!!!"

"Very good! Now put down one wid ould Bartle Gorman, of Nurchasy; an' two over wid Michael Morris, of Cargah. How many have you now?"

"Twelve in all!!!! But, Misther Connell, there's a demonstration badly wanted here: I must confiss I was always bright, but at present I'm as dark as Nox. I'd thank you for a taste of explanation."

"Asy, man alive! Is there twelve in all?"

"Twelve in all; I've calculated them."

"Well, we'll hould to that. Och, och!—I'm sure, *avourneen*, afore I'd let you suffer one minute's pain, I'd not scruple to take an oath aginst liquor, anyway. He may go an' wid the masses now for you, as soon as he likes! Mr. O'Flaherty, will you put that down on paper, an' I'll swear to it, wid a blessin', to-morrow."

"But what object do you wish to effectuate by this?"

"You see, masther, I dhrink one day wid another from a score to two dozen tumblers, an' I want to swear to no more nor twelve in the twenty-four hours."

"Why, there's intelligibility in that! Wid great pleasure, Mr. Connell, I'll indite it. Katty, tear me a lafe out o' Brian Murphy's copy there."

"You see, masther, it's for Ellish's sake I'm doin' this. State that in the oath."

"I know it; an' well she desarved that specimen of abstinence from you, Misther Connell. Thank you!—your health agin! an' God grant you grace and fortitude to go through wid the same oath!—an' so He will, or I'm grievously mistaken in you."

"*OATH AGAINST LIQUOR*

made by me, Cornelius O'Flaherty, Philomath, on behalf of Misther Pether O'Connell, of the Cross-roads, Merchant, on one part—and of the soul of Mrs. Ellish O'Connell, now in purgatory, Merchantess, on the other.

"I solemnly, and meritoriously, and soberly swear that a single

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tumbler of whisky punch shall not cross my lips during the twenty-four hours of the day, barring twelve, the locality of which is as followeth :—

Imprimis—Two tumblers at home	2
Secundo—Two more ditto at my son Dan's . . .	2
Tertio—Two more ditto behind my own garden . .	2
Quarto—One ditto at the Reverend Father Mulcahy's .	1
Quinto—Two more ditto at Frank Carroll's, of Kilclay .	2
Sexto—One ditto wid ould Bartle Gorman, of Nurchasy .	1
Septimo—Two more ditto wid Michael Morris, of Cargah .	2
	12

"*N.B.*—I except in case any Docthor of Physic might think it right and medical to ordher me more for my health; or in case I could get Father Mulcahy to take the oath off me for a start at a wedding or a christening, or at any other meeting of friends where there's drink.

"Witness present, "PETHER his × mark O'CONNELL.
"CORNELIUS O'FLAHERTY, Philomath.
"*June the 4th*, 18—.

"☞ I certify that I have made and calculated this oath for Misther Pether O'Connell, Merchant, and that it is strictly and arithmetically proper and correct.
"CORNELIUS O'FLAHERTY, Philomath.

"*Dated this 4th day of June*, 18—."

"I think, Misther O'Flaherty, it's a dacent oath as it stands. Plase God, I'll swear to it some time to-morrow evenin'."

"Dacent! Why, I don't wish to become eulogistically addicted, but I'd back the same oath, for both grammar and arithmetic, aginst any that ever was drawn up by a lawyer—ay, by Counsellor O'Connell [1] himself!—but, faith, I'd not face him at a vow, for all that; he's the greatest man at a vow in the three kingdoms."

"I'll tell you what I'm thinkin', masther—as my hand's in, mightn't I as well take another wid an ould frind o' mine, Andy Cavanagh, of Lisbuy? He's a dacent ould residenther, an' likes it. It'll make the baker's or the long dozen."

[1] Daniel O'Connell was first known to the people as a successful lawyer.—ED.

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"Why, it's not a bad thought; but won't thirteen get into your head?"

"No, nor three more to the back o' that. I only begin to get hearty about seventeen; so that the long dozen, afther all, is best; for God He knows I've a regard for Andy Cavanagh this many a year, an' I wouldn't wish to lave him out."

"Very well—I'll add it up to the other part of the oath.

Octavo—One ditto out of respect for dacent Andy Cavanagh, of Lisbuy 1

Now I must make the total amount thirteen, an' all will be right."

"Masther, have you a prayer-book widin? bekase if you have, I may as well swear it here, an' you can witness it."

"Katty, hand over the Spiritual Exercises—a book aquil to the Bible itself for piety an' devotion."

"Sure, they say, masther, any book that the name o' God's in is good for an oath. Now, wid the help o' goodness, repate the words afore me, an' I'll swear thim."

O'Flaherty hemmed two or three times, and complied with Peter's wishes, who followed him in the words until the oath was concluded. He then kissed the book, and expressed himself much at ease, as well, he said, upon the account of Ellish's soul, as for the sake of his children.

For some time after this his oath was the standing jest of the neighbourhood: even to this day Peter Connell's oath against liquor is a proverb in that part of the country. Immediately after he had sworn, no one could ever perceive that he violated it in the slightest degree; but there could be no doubt as to his literally fulfilling it. A day never passed in which he did not punctually pay a friendly visit to those whose names were dotted down, with whom he sat, pulled out his flask, and drank his quantum. In the meantime the poor man was breaking down rapidly; so much so that his appearance generally excited pity, if not sorrow, among his neighbours. His character became simpler every day, and his intellect evidently more exhausted. The inoffensive humour, for which he had been noted, was also completely on the wane; his eye was dim, his step feeble,

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but the benevolence of his heart never failed him. Many acts of his private generosity are well known, and still remembered with gratitude.

In proportion as the strength of his mind and constitution diminished, so did his capacity for bearing liquor. When he first bound himself by the oath not to exceed the long dozen, such was his vigour that the effects of thirteen tumblers could scarcely be perceived on him. This state of health, however, did not last. As he wore away, the influence of so much liquor was becoming stronger, until at length he found that it was more than he could bear, that he frequently confounded the names of the men and the number of tumblers mentioned in the oath, and sometimes took, in his route, persons and places not to be found in it at all. This grieved him, and he resolved to wait upon O'Flaherty, for the purpose of having some means devised of guiding him during his potations.

"Masther," said he, "we must thry an' make this oath somethin' plainer. You see, whin I get confused, I'm not able to remimber things as I ought. Sometimes, instid o' one tumbler, I take two at the wrong place; an' sarra bit o' me but called in an' had three wid ould Jack Rogers, that isn't in it at all. On another day I had a couple wid honest Barny Casey, an my way acrass to Bartle Gorman's. I'm not what I was, masther, *ahagur;* so I'd thank you to dhraw it out more clearer, if you can, nor it was."

"I see, Mr. Connell; I comprehend, wid the greatest ase in life, the very plan for it. We must reduce the oath to Geography, for I'm at home there, bein' a surveyor[1] myself. I'll lay down a map o' the parish, an' dhraw the houses of your friends at their proper places, so that you'll never be out o' your latitude at all."

"Faix, I doubt that, masther—ha, ha, ha!" replied Peter. "I'm afeard I will, of an odd time, for I'm not able to carry what I used to do; but no matther—thry what you can do for me this time, anyhow. I think I could bear the long dozen still, if I didn't make mistakes."

[1] The hedge schoolmasters, as readers of "The Hedge School" may recollect, were often employed as surveyors.

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O'Flaherty accordingly set himself to work; and as his knowledge, not only of the parish, but of every person and house in it, was accurate, he soon had a tolerably correct skeleton map of it drawn for Peter's use.

"Now," said he, "lend me your ears."

"Faix, I'll do no sich thing," replied Peter—"I know a thrick worth two of it. Lend you my ears, *inagh!*—catch me at it! You have a bigger pair of your own nor I have—ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, in other words, pay attintion. Now, see this dot—that's your own house."

"Put a crass there," said Peter, "an' thin I'll know it's the crass-roads."

"Upon my reputation, you're right; an' that's what I call a good specimen of ingenuity. I'll take the hint from that, an' we'll make it a hieroglyphical as well as a geographical oath. Well, there's a crass, wid two tumblers. Is that clear?"

"It is, it is! Go an."

"Now here we draw a line to your son Dan's. Let me see—he keeps a mill, an' sells cloth. Very good. I'll draw a mill-wheel an' a yard-wand. There's two tumblers. Will you know that?"

"I see it—go an—nothin' can be clearer. So far I can't go asthray."

"Well, what next? Two behind your own garden. What metaphor for the garden? Let me see—let me cogitate! A dragon—the Hesperides! That's beyant you. A bit of a hedge will do, an' a gate."

"Don't put a gate in, it's not lucky. You know when a man takes to dhrink, they say he's goin' a grey gate, or black gate, or a bad gate. Put that out, an' make the hedge longer, an' it'll do—wid the two tumblers, though."

"They're down. One at the Reverend Father Mulcahy's. How will we thranslate the priest?"

"Faix, I doubt that will be a difficquilt business."

"Upon my reputation, I agree wid you in that, especially whin he repates Latin. However, we'll see. He writes P.P. afther his name—pee-pee is what we call the turkeys wid. What ud you think o' two turkeys?"

"The priest would like them roasted, but I couldn't

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undherstand that. No—put down the sign o' the horsewhip or the cudgel; for he's handy an' argues well wid both!"

"Good! I'll put down the horsewhip first, an' the cudgel alongside of it, then the tumbler; an' there 'ill be the sign o' the priest."

"Ay, do, masther, an' faix the priest 'ill be complate—there can be no mistakin' him thin. Devil a one but that's a good thought!"

"There it is in black an' white. Who comes next? Frank Carroll. He's a farmer. I'll put down a spade an' a harrow. Well, that's done—two tumblers."

"I won't mistake that aither; it's clear enough."

"Bartle Gorman's, of Nurchasy. Bartle's a little lame, an' uses a staff wid a cross on the end that he houlds in his hand. I'll put down a staff wid a cross on it."

"Would there be no danger of me mistakin' that for the priest's cudgel?"

"Not the slightest. I'll pledge my knowledge of geography they're two very different weapons."

"Well, put it down—I'll know it."

"Michael Morris, of Cargah. What for him? Michael's a pig-driver. I'll put down a pig. You'll comprehend that?"

"I ought; for many a pig I sould him in my day. Put down the pig; an' if you could put two black spots upon his back, I'd know it to be one I sould him about four years agone—the fattest ever was in the country—it had to be brought home on a car, for it wasn't able to walk wid fat."

"Very good—the spots are on it. The last is Andy Cavanagh, of Lisbuy. Now, do you see that I've drawn a line from place to place, so that you have nothing to do only to keep to it as you go. What for Andy?"

"Andy! Let me see—Andy! Pooh! What's come over me that I've nothing for Andy? Ay! I have it. He's a horse-jockey—put down a grey mare I sould him about five years agone."

"I'll put down a horse; but I can't make a grey mare wid black ink."

"Well, make a mare of her, anyway."

"Faith, an' that same puzzles me. Stop, I have it—I'll put a foal along wid her."

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"As good as the bank. God bless you, Misther O'Flaherty. I think this'll keep me from mistakes. An' now, if you'll slip up to me afther dusk, I'll send you down a couple of bottles and a flitch. Sure, you desarve more for the throuble you tuck." [1]

Peter had, however, overrated his own strength in supposing that he could bear the long dozen in future; ere many months passed he was scarcely able to reach the half of that number without sinking into intoxication. Whilst in this state, he was in the habit of going to the graveyard in which his wife lay buried, where he sat and wept like a child, sang her favourite songs, or knelt and offered up his prayers for the repose of her soul. None ever mocked him for this; on the contrary, there was always some kind person to assist him home. And as he staggered on, instead of sneers and ridicule, one might hear such expressions as these:—

"Poor Pether! he's nearly off; an' a dacent, kind neighbour he ever was. The death of the wife broke his heart—he never ris his head since."

"Ay, poor man! God pity him! He'll soon be sleepin' beside her, beyant there, where she's lyin'. It was never known of Pether Connell that he offinded man, woman, or child since he was born, barrin' the gaugers, bad luck to thim, afore he was marrid—but that was no offince. Sowl, he was their match, anyhow. When he an' the wife's gone, they won't lave their likes behind them. The sons are *bodaghs*—gintlemen, now; an' it's nothin' but dinners an' company. *Ahagur*, that wasn't the way their hard-workin' father an' mother made the money that they're houldin' their heads up wid such consequence upon."

The children, however, did not give Peter up as hopeless. Father Mulcahy, too, once more assailed him on his weak side. One morning, when he was sober, nervous, and depressed, the priest arrived, and finding him at home, addressed him as follows:—

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[1] Many of my English readers will be somewhat startled to hear that, except the change of names and places, there is actually little exaggeration in the form of this oath; so just is the observation that the romance of truth frequently far exceeds that of fiction.

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"Peter, I'm sorry, and vexed, and angry this morning; and you are the cause of it."

"How is that, your reverence?" said Peter. "God help me," he added, "don't be hard an me, sir, for I'm to be pitied. Don't be hard an me for the short time I'll be here. I know it won't be long—I'll be wid her soon. *Asthore machree*, we'll be together, I hope, afore long—an', oh! if it was the will o' God, I would be glad it was afore night!"

The poor shattered, heart-broken creature wept bitterly; for he felt somewhat sensible of the justice of the reproof which he expected from the priest, as well as undiminished sorrow for his wife.

"I'm not going to be hard on you," said the good-natured priest; "I only called to tell you a dream that your son Dan had last night about you and his mother."

"About Ellish! Oh, for heaven's sake, what about her, father, *avourneen?*"

"She appeared to him last night," replied Father Mulcahy, "and told him that your drinking kept her out of happiness."

"Queen of Heaven!" exclaimed Peter, deeply affected, "is that true? Oh," said he, dropping on his knees, "father, *ahagur machree*, pardon me—oh, forgive me! I now promise, solemnly and seriously, to drink neither in the house nor out of it, for the time to come, not one drop at all, good, bad, or indifferent, of either whisky, wine, or punch—barrin' one glass. Are you now satisfied? an' do you think she'll get to happiness?"

"All will be well, I trust," said the priest. "I shall mention this to Dan and the rest, and depend upon it, they, too, will be happy to hear it."

"Here's what Mr. O'Flaherty an' myself made up," said Peter; "burn it, father—take it out of my sight, for it's now no use to me."

"What is this at all?" said Mr. Mulcahy, looking into it. "Is it an oath?"

"It's the joggraphy of one I swore some time ago; but it's now out of date—I'm done wid it."

The priest could not avoid smiling when he perused it; and on getting from Peter's lips an explanation of the hieroglyphics, he laughed heartily at the ingenious shifts they had made to guide his memory.

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Peter, for some time after this, confined himself to one glass, as he had promised; but he felt such depression and feebleness that he ventured slowly, and by degrees, to enlarge the "glass" from which he drank. His impression touching the happiness of his wife was that, as he had for several months strictly observed his promise, she had probably during that period gone to heaven. He then began to exercise his ingenuity gradually, as we have said, by using, from time to time, a glass larger than the preceding one; thus receding from the spirit of his vow to the letter, and increasing the quantity of his drink from a small glass to the most capacious tumbler he could find. The manner in which he drank this was highly illustrative of the customs which prevail on this subject in Ireland. He remembered that in making the vow he used the words, "neither in the house nor out of it;" but in order to get over this dilemma, he usually stood with one foot outside the threshold, and the other in the house, keeping himself in that position which would render it difficult to determine whether he was either out or in. At other times when he happened to be upstairs, he usually thrust one-half of his person out of the window, with the same ludicrous intention of keeping the letter of his vow.

Many a smile this adroitness of his occasioned to the lookers-on; but further ridicule was checked by his woe-begone and afflicted look. He was now a mere skeleton, feeble and tottering.

One night in the depth of winter he went into the town where his two sons resided; he had been ill in mind and body during the day, and he fancied that change of scene and society might benefit him. His daughter and son-in-law, in consequence of his illness, watched him so closely that he could not succeed in getting his usual "glass." This offended him, and he escaped without their knowledge to the son who kept the inn. On arriving there, he went upstairs, and by a *douceur* to the waiter, got a large tumbler filled with spirits. The lingering influences of a conscience that generally felt strongly on the side of moral duty, though poorly instructed, prompted him to drink it in the usual manner, by keeping one-half of his body, as nearly as he could guess, out of the window, that it might be said he drank it neither in nor out

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of the house. He had scarcely finished his draught, however, when he lost his balance, and was precipitated upon the pavement. The crash of his fall was heard in the bar, and his son, who had just come in, ran, along with several others, to ascertain what had happened. They found him, however, only severely stunned. He was immediately brought in, and medical aid sent for; but though he recovered from the immediate effects of the fall, the shock it gave to his broken constitution, and his excessive grief, carried him off a few months afterwards. He expired in the arms of his son and daughter, and amidst the tears of those who knew his simplicity of character, his goodness of heart, and his attachment to the wife by whose death that heart had been broken.

Such was the melancholy end of the honest and warm-hearted Peter Connell, who, unhappily, was not a solitary instance of a man driven to habits of intoxication and neglect of business by the force of sorrow, which time and a well-regulated mind might otherwise have overcome. We have held him up, on the one hand, as an example worthy of imitation in that industry and steadiness which, under the direction of his wife, raised him from poverty to independence and wealth; and, on the other, as a man resorting to the use of spirituous liquors that he might be enabled to support affliction—a course which, so far from having sustained him under it, shattered his constitution, shortened his life, and destroyed his happiness. In conclusion, we wish our countrymen of Peter's class would imitate him in his better qualities, and try to avoid his failings.

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THE POOR SCHOLAR

ONE day about the middle of November in the year 18—, Dominick M'Evoy and his son Jemmy were digging potatoes on the side of a hard, barren hill, called Esker Dhu. The day was bitter and wintry; the men were thinly clad; and as the keen blast swept across the hill with considerable violence, the sleet-like rain which it bore along pelted into their garments with pitiless severity. The father had advanced into more than middle age; and having held, at a rack-rent, the miserable waste of farm which he occupied, he was compelled to exert himself in its cultivation, despite either obduracy of soil or inclemency of weather. This day, however, was so unusually severe that the old man began to feel incapable of continuing his toil. The son bore it better; but whenever a cold rush of stormy rain came over them, both were compelled to stand with their sides against it, and their heads turned, so as that the ear almost rested back upon the shoulder in order to throw the rain off their faces. Of each, however, that cheek which was exposed to the rain and storm was beaten into a red hue, whilst the other part of their faces was both pale and hunger-pinched.

The father paused to take breath, and supported by his spade, looked down upon the sheltered inland, which, inhabited chiefly by Protestants and Presbyterians, lay rich and warm-looking under him.

"Why, thin," he exclaimed to the son, a lad about fifteen, "sure I know well I oughtn't to curse yees anyway, you black set; and yit, the Lord forgive me my sins, I'm almost timpted to give yees a volley, an' that from my heart out! Look at thim, Jimmy *agra*—only look at the black thieves! how warm an' wealthy they sit there in our own ould possessions, an' here we must toil, till our fingers are worn to the stumps, upon this thievin' bent. The curse of Cromwell on it! You might as well ax the divil for a blessin' as expect anything

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like a dacent crop out of it. Look at thim two ridges!—such a poor sthring o' praties is in it!—one here and one there—and yit we must turn up the whole ridge for that same! Well, God sind the time soon whin the right will take place, Jimmy *agra!*"

"An' doesn't Pasthorini say it! Sure, whin Twenty-five comes, we'll have our own agin; the right will overcome the might—the bottomless pit will be locked—ay, double boulted, if St. Pether gets the kays, for he's the very boy that will accommodate the heretics wid a warm corner; an' yit, faith, there's many o' thim that myself ud put in a good word for, afther all."

"Throth, an' here's the same, Jimmy. There's Jack Stuart, an' if there's a cool corner in hell, the same Jack will get it—an' that he may I pray God this day, an' amin! The Lord sind it to him! for he richly desarves it. Kind, neighbourly, and frindly is he an' all belongin' to him—an' I wouldn't be where a hard word ud be spoken of him, nor a dog in connection wid the family ill thrated—for which rason may he get a cool corner in hell, I humbly sufficate."

"What do you think of Jack Taylor? Will he be cosy?"

"Throth, I doubt so—a blessed youth is Jack; yit I myself ud hardly wish it. He's a heerum-skeerum, divil-may-care fellow, no doubt of it, an' laughs at the priests, which same, I'm thinkin', will get him below stairs more nor a new-milk heat, anyway; but thin, agin, he thrates thim dacent, an' gives thim good dinners, and they take all his rollickin in good part, so that it's likely he's not in arnest in it, an' surely they ought to know best, Jimmy."

"What do you think of Yallow Sam?—*honest* Sam, that they say was born widout a heart, an' carries the black wool in his ears, to keep out the cries of the widows an' the orphans that are long rotten in their graves through his villainy. He'll get a snug berth!"[1]

"Yallow Sam," replied the old man slowly, and a dark shade of intense hatred blackened his weather-beaten counte-

[1] This was actually said of the person alluded to—a celebrated usurer, and agent to two or three estates, who was a little deaf, and had his ears occasionally stuffed with black wool.

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nance as he looked in the direction from which the storm blew—"'twas he left us where we're standin', Jimmy—undher this blast, that's cowldher an' bittherer nor a step-mother's breath this cuttin' day! 'Twas he turned us on the wide world whin your poor mother was risin' out of her faver. 'Twas he squenched the hearth whin she wasn't able to lave the house, till I carried her in my arms into Paddy Cassidy's—the tears fallin' from my eyes upon her face that I loved next to God. Didn't he give our farm to a purple Orangeman? Out we went to the winds an' skies of heaven, bekase the rich *bodagh* made interest aginst us. I tould him whin he chated me out o' my fifteen goolden guineas that his masther, the landlord, should hear of it; but I could never get next or near him to make my complaint? Eh?—a snug berth! I'm only afeard that hell has no corner hot enough for him—but lave that to the divil himself; if he doesn't give him the best thratement that hell can afford, why, I'm not here."

"Divil a one o' the ould boy's so bad as they say, father; he gives it to thim hot an' heavy, at all evints."

"Why, even if he was at a loss about Sam, depind upon it he'd get a hint from his betthers above that ud be sarviceable."

"They say he visits him as it is, and that Sam can't sleep widout some one in the room wid him. Dan Philips says the priest was there, an' had a mass in every room in the house; but Charley Mack tells me there's no thruth in it. He was advised to it, he says; but it seems the ould boy has too strong a hoult of him, for Sam said he'd have the divil any time sooner nor the priest, and it's likest what he would say."

"Och, och, Jimmy, *avick*, I'm tired out! We had betther give in; the day's too hard, an' there's no use in standin' agin the weather that's in it. Lave the ould villain to God, who He can't chate, anyway."

"Well, may our curse go along wid the rest upon him, for dhrivin' us to sich an unnatural spot as this! Hot an' heavy, into the sowl an' marrow of him, may it penethrate! An' sure, that's no more than all the counthry's wishin' him, whether or not—not to mintion the curses that's risin' out o' the grave agin him, loud an' piercin'!"

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"God knows it's not slavin' yourself on such a day as this you'd be, only for him. Had we kep' our farm, you'd be now well an in your larnin' for a priest—an' there ud be one o' the family sure to be a gintleman, anyhow; but that's gone too, *agra*. Look at the smoke, how comfortably it rises from Jack Sullivan's, where the priest has a station to-day. 'Tisn't fishin' for a sthray pratie he is, upon a ridge like this. But it can't be helped; an' God's will be done! Not himself!—faix, it's he that'll get the height of good thratement, an' can ride home, well lined, both inside an' outside. Much good may it do him!—'tis but his right."

The lad now paused in his turn, looked down on Jack Sullivan's comfortable house, sheltered by a clump of trees, and certainly saw such a smoke tossed up from the chimney as gave unequivocal evidence of preparation for a good dinner. He next looked "behind the wind," with a visage made more blank and meagre by the contrast; after which he reflected for a few minutes, as if working up his mind to some sudden determination. The deliberation, however, was short: he struck his open hand upon the head of the spade with much animation, and instantly took it in both hands, exclaiming—

"Here, father—here goes; to the divil once an' for ever I pitch slavery," and as he spoke, the spade was sent as far from him as he had strength to throw it. "To the divil I pitch slavery! An' now, father, wid the help o' God, this is the last day's work I'll ever put my hand to. There's no way of larnin' Latin here; but off to Munster I'll start, an' my face you'll never see in this parish till I come home a priest an' a gintleman! But that's not all, father dear; I'll rise you out of your distress, or die in the struggle. I can't bear to see your grey hairs in sorrow and poverty."

"Well, Jimmy—well, *agra*—God enable you, *avourneen;* 'tis a good intintion. The divil a one o' me will turn another spadeful aither, for this day; I'm *dhrookin'* [1] wid the rain. We'll go home an' take an air o' the fire—we want it; and aftherwards we can talk about what you're on for."

It is usual to attribute to the English and Scotch character

[1] Dripping, very wet.

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exclusively a cool and persevering energy in the pursuit of such objects as inclination or interest may propose for attainment; whilst Irishmen are considered too much the creatures of impulse to reach a point that requires coolness, condensation of thought, and efforts successively repeated. This is a mistake. It is the opinion of Englishmen and Scotchmen who know not the Irish character thoroughly. The fact is, that in the attainment of an object, where a sad-faced Englishman would despair, an Irishman will probably laugh, drink, weep, and fight during his progress to accomplish it. A Scotchman will miss it, perhaps; but having done all that could be done, he will try another speculation. The Irishman may miss it, too; but to console himself he would break the head of any man who may have impeded him in his efforts, as a proof that he ought to have succeeded; or if he cannot manage that point, he will crack the pate of the first man he meets, or he will get drunk, or he will marry a wife, or burn a house, or hamstring a neighbour's cow, or cut the throat of a proctor, or swear a gauger never to show his face in that quarter again; or he will exclaim, if it be concerning a farm, with a countenance full of simplicity—"God bless your honour; long life and honour to you, sir! Sure an' 'twas but a thrifle, anyhow, that your reverence will make up for me another time. An' 'tis well I know your lordship ud be the last man on airth to give me the cowld shoulder, so you would, an' I an ould residenthur on your own father's estate, the Lord be praised for that same! An' tis a happiness, an' nothin' else, so it is, even if I paid double rint—wherein, maybe, I'm not a day's journey from that same, manin' the double rint, yer honour; only that one would do a great deal for the honour an' glory of livin' undher a raal gintleman—an' that's but rason."

There is, in short, a far-sightedness in an Irishman which is not properly understood, because it is difficult to understand it. I do not think there is a nation on earth whose inhabitants mix up their interest and their feelings together more happily, shrewdly, and yet less ostensibly, than Irishmen contrive to do. An Irishman will make you laugh at his joke, while the object of that joke is wrapped up from you in

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the profoundest mystery, and you will consequently make the concession to a certain point of his character, which has been really obtained by a faculty you had not penetration to discover, or, rather, which he had too much sagacity to exhibit. Of course, as soon as your back is turned, the broad grin is on him, and one of his cheeks is stuck out two inches beyond the other, because his tongue is in it—at your stupidity, simplicity, or folly. Of all the characters of all the people of all nations on this habitable globe, I verily believe that that of the Irish is the most profound and unfathomable, and the most difficult on which to form a system, either social, moral, or religious. The only power equal to grapple with it is that of the Church of Rome, and certainly that lays Paddy in the dust; there he is overreached, and "bammed," and blarneyed, and made to knock under.

It would be difficult, for example, to produce a more signal instance of energy, system, and perseverance than that exhibited in Ireland during the struggle for Emancipation. Was there not flattery to the dust? blarney to the eyes? heads broken? throats cut? houses burned? and cattle houghed? And why? Was it for the mere pleasure of blarney—of breaking heads (I won't dispute the last point, though, because I scorn to give up the glory of the national character)—of cutting throats—burning houses—or houghing cattle? No; but to secure Emancipation. In attaining that object was exemplified the Irish method of gaining a point.

"Yes," said Jemmy, "to the divil I pitch slavery! I will come home able to rise yees from your poverty, or never show my face in the parish of Ballysogarth agin."

When the lad's determination was mentioned to his mother and the family, there was a loud and serious outcry against it; for no circumstance is relished that ever takes away a member from an Irish hearth, no matter what the nature of that circumstance may be.

"Och, thin, is it for that *bocaun* of a boy to set off wid himsel', runnin' through the wide world afther larnin' widout money or friends? *Avourneen*, put it out of yer head. No—struggle on as the rest of us is doin', and maybe ye'll come as well off at the long-run.'

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"Mother, dear," said the son, "I wouldn't wish to go agin what you'd say; but I made a promise to myself to rise yees out of your poverty if I can, an' my mind's made up on it; so don't cross me, or be the manes of my havin' bad luck on my journey, in regard of me goin' aginst yer will, when you know 'twould be the last thing I'd wish to do."

"Let the *gorsoon* take his way, Vara. Who knows but it was the Almighty put the thoughts of it into his head. Pasthorini says that there will soon be a change, an' 'tis a good skame it'll be to have him a *sogarth* when the fat livins will be walkin' back to their ould owners."

"Oh, an' may the Man above grant that, I pray Jamini this day! for aren't we harrished out of our lives, scrapin' an' scramblin' for the black thieves[1] what we ought to put on our backs an' into our own mouths. Well, they say it's not lucky to take money from a priest, because it's the price o' sin, an' no more it can, seein' that they want it themselves; but I'm sure it's *their* money that ought to carry the bad luck to them, in regard of their gettin' so many bitther curses along wid it."

When a lad from the humblest classes resolves to go to Munster as a poor scholar, there is but one course to be pursued in preparing his outfit: this is by a collection at the chapel among the parishioners, to whom the matter is made known by the priest, from the altar, some Sunday previous to his departure. Accordingly, when the family had all given their consent to Jemmy's project, his father went, on the following day, to communicate the matter to the priest, and to solicit his co-operation in "questing," or making a collection in behalf of the lad, on the next Sunday but one; for there is always a week's notice given, and sometimes more, that the people may come prepared.

The conversation already detailed between father and son took place on Friday; and on Saturday, a day on which the priest never holds a station, and, of course, is generally at home, Dominick M'Evoy went to his house, with the object already specified in view. The priest was at home; a truly benevolent man, but like the worthies of his day, not over-

[1] The Protestant clergy.

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whelmed with learning, though brimful of kindness and hospitality mixed up with drollery and simple cunning.

"Good morrow, Dominick," said the priest, as Dominick entered.

"Good morrow kindly, sir," replied Dominick. "I hope your reverence is well, *and* in good health."

"Throth, I am, Dominick. I hope there's nothing wrong at home—how is the wife and childher?"

"I humbly thank your reverence for axin'. Throth, there's no rason for complainin' in regard o' the health; sarra one o' them but's bravely, consitherin' all things. I b'lieve I'm the worst o' them myself, yer reverence. I'm gettin' ould, you see, an' stiff, an' wake; but that's only in the coorse o' nathur; a man can't last always. Wait till them that's young an' hearty now harrows as much as I ploughed in my day, an' they won't have much to brag of. Why, thin, but yer reverence stands it bravely—faix, wondherfully itself—the Lord be praised! an' it warms my own heart to see you look so well."

"Thank you, Dominick. Indeed, my health, God be thanked, is very good. Ellish," he added, calling to an old female servant—"you'll take a glass, Dominick, the day is cowldish—Ellish, here, take the kay, and get some spirits—the *poteen*, Ellish—to the right hand in the cupboard. Indeed, my health is very good, Dominick. Father Murray says he invies me my appetite, an' I tell him he's guilty of one of the seven deadly sins."

"Ha, ha, ha!—faix, an' invy is one o' them, sure enough; but a joke is a joke in the manetime. A pleasant gintleman is the same Father Murray; but yer reverence is too deep for him in the jokin' line, for all that. Ethen, sir, but it's you that gave ould Cokely the keen cut about his religion—ha, ha, ha! Myself laughed till I was sick for two days afther it—the ould thief!"

"Eh?—did you hear that, Dominick?—Are you sure that's the *poteen*, Ellish?—Ay, an' the best of it all was that his pathrun, Lord Foxhunter, was present. Come, Dominick, try that—it never seen wather. But the best of it all was—

"'Well, Father Kavanagh,' said he, 'who put you into the Church? Now,' said he, 'you'll come over me wid your regular succession from St. Peter, but I won't allow that.'

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"'Why, Mr. Cokely,' says I back to him, 'I'll give up the succession,' says I, 'and what is more, I'll grant that you have been called by the Lord, and that I have not; but the Lord that called you,' says I, 'was Lord Foxhunter.' Man, you'd tie his Lordship wid a cobweb, he laughed so heartily.

"'Bravo, Father Kavanagh,' said he. 'Cokely, you're bate,' said he; 'and upon my honour, you must both dine with me to-day,' says he—and capital claret he keeps."

"Your health, Father Kavanagh, an' God spare you to us! Hah! wather!—oh, the divil a taste itself did the same stuff *see*. Why, thin, I think your reverence an' me's about an age. I bleeve I'm a thrifle ouldher; but I don't bear it so well as you do. The family, you see, and the childher, an' the cares o' the world, pull me down—throth, the same family's a throuble to me. I wish I had them all settled safe, anyway."

"What do you intend to do wid them, Dominick?"

"In throth, that's what brought me to yer reverence. I've one boy—Jimmy—a smart chap entirely, an' he has taken it into his head to go as a poor scholar to Munster. He's fond o' the larnin', there's not a doubt o' that, and small blame to him, to be sure; but then, again, what can I do? He's bint on goin', an' I'm not able to help him, poor fellow, in any shape; so I made bould to see yer reverence about it, in hopes that you might be able to plan out something for him more betther nor I could do. I have the good wishes of the neighbours, and indeed of the whole parish, let the thing go as it may."

"I know that, Dominick, and for the same rason we'll have a 'quest' at the three althars. I'll mintion it to them after mass to-morrow, and let them be prepared for Sunday week, when you can make the collection. Hut, man, never fear; we'll get as much as will send him half-way to the priesthood; and I'll tell you what, Dominick, I'll never be the man to refuse giving him a couple of guineas myself."

"May the Heavenly Father bless an' keep your reverence. I'm sure 'tis a good right the boy has, as well as all of us, to never forget your kindness. But as to the money—he'll be proud of your assistance the other way, sir—so not a penny—'tis only your goodwill we want—hem—except, indeed, that you'd wish yourself to make a piece of kindness of it to the

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poor boy. Oh, not a drop more, sir—I declare it'll be apt to get into my head. Well, well—sure an' we're not to disobey our clargy, whether or not; so here's your health over agin, your reverence! an' success to the poor child that's bint on good!"

"Two guineas his reverence is to give you from himself, Jimmy," said the father, on relating the success of this interview with the priest; "an' faix, I was widin one of refusin' it, for feard it might bring something unlucky[1] wid it; but, thought I, on the spur, it's best to take it, anyway. We can aisily put it off on some o' these black-mouthed Presbytarians or Orangemen, by way of changin' it, an' if there's any hard fortune in it, let them have the full benefit of it, *ershi misha.*"

It is by trifles of this nature that the invincible and enduring hatred with which the religious sects of Ireland detest those of a different creed is best known. This feeling, however, is sufficiently mutual. Yet on both sides there is something more speculative than practical in its nature. When they speak of each other as a distinct class, the animosity, though abstracted, appears to be most deep; but when they mingle in the necessary intercourse of life, it is curious to see them frequently descend, on both sides, from the general rule to those exceptions of goodwill and kindness which natural benevolence and mutual obligation, together with a correct knowledge of each other's real characters, frequently produce.

Dominick's conduct in the matter of the priest's money was also a happy illustration of that mixture of simplicity and shrewdness with which an Irishman can frequently make points meet, which superstition alone, without ingenuity, would keep separate for ever. Many another man might have refused the money from an ignorant dread of its proving unlucky; but his mode of reasoning on the subject was satisfactory to himself, and certainly the most ingenious which, according to his belief, he could have adopted.

The eloquence of a country priest, though rude, and by no means elevated, is sometimes well adapted to the end

[1] There is a superstitious belief in some parts of Ireland that priest's money is unlucky; "because," say the people, "it is the price of sin"—alluding to absolution.

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in view, to the feelings of his auditory, and to the nature of the subject on which he speaks. Pathos and humour are the two levers by which the Irish character is raised or depressed; and these are blended in a manner too anomalous to be ever properly described. Whoever could be present at a sermon on the Sunday when a Purgatorian Society is to be established would hear pathos and see grief of the first water. It is then he would get a "nate" and glowing description of Purgatory, and see the broad, humorous Milesian faces of three or four thousand persons of both sexes shaped into an expression of the most grotesque and clamorous grief. The priest, however, on particular occasions of this nature, very shrewdly gives notice of the sermon, and of the purpose for which it is to be preached: if it be grave, the people are prepared to cry; but if it be for a political or any other purpose not decidedly religious, there will be abundance of that rough, blunt satire and mirth so keenly relished by the peasantry, illustrated, too, by the most comical and ridiculous allusions. That priest, indeed, who is the best master of this latter faculty is uniformly the greatest favourite. It is no unfrequent thing to see the majority of an Irish congregation drowned in sorrow and tears, even when they are utterly ignorant of the language spoken—particularly in those districts where the Irish is still the vernacular tongue. This is what renders notice of the sermon and its purport necessary; otherwise the honest people might be seriously at a loss whether to laugh or cry.

"*Ellish, avourneen, gho dhe dirsha?*—Ellish, my dear, what is he saying?"

"*Och, musha niel eshighum, ahagur — ta sha er Purgathor, ta barlhum*—Och, I dunna that, jewel; I b'lieve he's on Purgatory."

"Och, och, oh—och, och, oh—oh, i, oh, i, oh!"

And on understanding that Purgatory is the subject, they commence their grief with a rocking motion, wringing their hands, and unconsciously passing their beads through their fingers, whilst their bodies are bent forward towards the earth.

On the contrary, when the priest gets jocular—which I

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should have premised he never does in what is announced as a solemn sermon—you might observe several faces, charged with mirth and laughter, turned, even while beaming with this expression, to those who kneel beside them, inquiring—

"*Arrah*, Barny, what is it—ha, ha, ha!—what is it he's sayin'? The Lord spare him among us, anyhow, the darlin' of a man! Eh, Barny, you that's in the inside o' the English?"

Barny, however, is generally too much absorbed in the fun to become interpreter just then; but as soon as the joke is nearly heard out, in compliance with the importunity of his neighbours, he gives them a brief hint or two, and instantly the full chorus is rung out, long, loud, and jocular.

On the Sunday in question, as the subject could not be called strictly religious, the priest, who knew that a joke or two would bring in many an additional crown to Jimmy's *caubeen*,[1] was determined that they should at least have a laugh for their money. The man, besides, was benevolent, and knew the way to the Irish heart—a knowledge which he felt happy in turning to the benefit of the lad in question.

With this object in view, he addressed the people somewhat in the following language:—

"*Blessed is he that giveth his money to him that standeth in need of it.*

"These words, my brethren, are taken from St. Paul, who, among ourselves, knew the value of a friend in distress, as well as any other apostle in the three kingdoms—hem. It's a nate text, my friends, anyhow. He manes, however, when we have it to give, my own true, well-tried ould friends!—when we have it to give. Its absence althers the case *in toto;* because you have all heard the proverb—'There is no takin' money out of an empty purse;' or, as an ould, ancient author said long ago upon the same subject—

'Çantabit whackuus coram lathrone whiathur!'

—(Dshk, dshk, dshk[2]—that's the larnin'!)—He that carries an empty purse may whistle at the thief. It's sing in the

[1] These collections were generally made in hats or *caubeens*.

[2] This sound, which expresses wonder, is produced by striking the tip of the tongue against the palate.

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Latin; but sing or whistle, in my opinion he that goes wid an empty purse seldom sings or whistles to a pleasant tune. Melancholy music I'd call it, an' wouldn't, maybe, be much astray afther all. Hem. At all evints, may none of this present congregation, whin at their devotions, ever sing or whistle to the same tune! No; let it be to 'money in both pockets,' if you sing at all; and as long as you have that, never fear but you'll also have the 'priest in his boots' into the bargain—(Ha, ha, ha!—God bless him—isn't he the pleasant gintleman, all out?—ha, ha, ha!—moreover, an' by the same a-token, it's thrue as Gospel, so it is.)—for well I know that you're the high-spirited people, who wouldn't see your priest without them, while a fat parson with half a dozen chins upon him, red and rosy, goes about every day in the week bogged in boots, like a horse-trooper!—(Ha, ha, ha!—good, Father Dan! More power to you—ha, ha, ha! We're the boys that wouldn't see you in want o' them, sure enough. Isn't he the droll crathur?)

"But suppose a man hasn't money, what is he to do? Now this divides itself into what is called hydrostatics an' metaphysics, and must be proved logically in the following manner:—

"First—we suppose him not to have the money—there I may be wrong or I may be right; now for the illustration and the logic.

"Pether Donovan."

"Here, your reverence."

"Now, Pether, if I suppose you to have no money, am I right or am I wrong?"

"Why, thin, I'd be sarry to prove your reverence to be wrong, so I would; but for all that, I believe I must give it aginst you."

"How much have you got, Pether?"

"Ethen, but 'tis yer reverence that's comin' close upon me—two or three small notes an' some silver."

"How much silver, Pether?"

"I'll tell your reverence in a jiffy. I ought to have a ten shillin', barrin' the price of a quarther o' tobaccy that I bought at the crass-roads beyant. Nine shillins an' some hapuns, yer reverence."

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"Very good, Pether; you must hand me the silver, till I give the rest of the illustration wid it."

"But does yer reverence mind another ould proverb?—'A fool an' his money's asy parted.' Sure an' I know you're goin' to do a joke upon me."

("Give him the money, Pether," from a hundred voices—"give his reverence the money, you nager, you—give him the silver, you dirty *spalpeen*, you—hand it out, you misert.")

"Pether, if you don't give it dacently, I'll not take it; and in that case——"

"Here, here, your reverence—here it is; sure, I wouldn't have your ill-will for all I'm worth."

"Why, you nager, if I wasn't the first orathor livin', barrin' Cicero or Demosthenes himself, I couldn't schrew a penny out o' you! Now, Pether, there's a specimen of logic for you; an' if it wasn't good, depind upon it the money would be in your pocket still. I've never known you to give a penny for any charitable purpose since ever I saw your face; but I'm doin' a good action in your behalf for once; so if you have any movin' words to say to the money in question, say them, for you'll never finger it more."

A burst of the most uproarious mirth followed this manœuvre, in which the simple priest joined heartily; whilst the melancholy of Peter's face was ludicrously contrasted with the glee which characterised those that surrounded him.

"Hem!—secondly—a man, you see, may have money, or he may not, when his fellow-creature who stands in need of it makes an appale to his dacency and his feelings; and sorry I'd be to think that there's a man before me, or woman either, who'd refuse to assist the distresses of any one, of any creed, church, or persuasion, whether white, black, or yallow. It's what I never taught you, nor never will tache you to the day of my death! To be sure, a fellow-creature may say, 'Help me, my brother, I am distressed,' or, 'I am bent on a good purpose that your kindness can enable me to accomplish.' But suppose that you have not the money about you at the time, wouldn't you feel sorry to the backbone? Ay, would yees—to the very core of the heart itself. Or if any

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man—an' he'd be nothing else than a *bodagh* that would say it—if any man would tell me that you would not, I'd—yes—I'd give him his answer, as good as I gave to ould Cokely long ago.

"The next point is, what would you do if you hadn't it about you? It's I that can tell you what you'd do: you'd say, 'I haven't got it, brother'—for ev'ry created bein' of the human kind is your brother, barrin' the women, an' they are your sisters—(this produced a grin upon many faces)—'but,' says you, 'if you wait for a day or two, or a week, or maybe for a fortnight, I'll try what I can do to help you.'

"Picture to yourselves a fellow-creature in distress—suppose him to have neither hat, shoe, nor stocking—(this was a touch of the pathetic)—and altogether in a state of utter destitution! Can there be a more melancholy picture than this? No, there can't. But 'tisn't the tithe of it!—a barefaced robbery is the same tithe—think of him without father, mother, or friend upon the earth—maybe he has poor health—maybe he's sick, an' in a sthrange country—(here Jemmy's mother and friends sobbed aloud, and the contagion began to spread—the priest, in fact, knew where to touch)—his face is pale—his eyes sunk with sickness and sorrow in his head—his bones are cuttin' the skin—he knows not where to turn himself—hunger and sickness are strivin' for him.—(Here the grief became loud and general, and even the good-natured preacher's own voice got somewhat unsteady.)—He's in a bad state entirely—miserable! more miserable!! most miserable!!!—(och, och, oh!)—sick, sore, and sorry!—he's to be pitied, felt for, and compassionated!—(a general outcry)—'tis a faver he has, or an ague, maybe, or a rheumatism, or an embargo[1] on the limbs, or the king's evil, or a consumption, or a decline, or God knows but it's the falling-sickness—(och, och, oh!—och, och, oh! from the whole congregation, whilst the simple old man's eyes were blinded with tears at the force of the picture he drew)—ay, maybe it's the falling-sickness, and in that case how on earth can he stand it!—(He can't, he can't, *wurra strew, wurra strew!*—och, och, oh!—ogh, ogh, ogh!)—The Lord in heaven look down upon

[1] Lumbago.

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him—(amin, amin, this blessed an' holy Sunday that's in it!—och, oh!)—pity him—(amin, amin!—och, och, an' amin!)—with miseracordial feeling and benediction! He hasn't a rap in his company!—moneyless, friendless, houseless, an' homeless! Ay, my friends, you all have homes—but he has none! Thrust back by every hard-hearted *spalpeen*, and he, maybe, a better father's son than the Turk that refuses him! Look at your own childher, my friends! Bring the case home to yourselves! Suppose he was one of them—alone on the earth, and none to pity him in his sorrows!—your own childher, I say, in a strange land!—(Here the outcry became astounding—men, women, and children in one general uproar of grief.)—An' this may all be Jemmy M'Evoy's case, that's going in a week or two to Munster as a poor scholar—may be his case, I say, except you befriend him, and show your dacency and your feelings, like Christians and Catholics; and for either dacency or kindness I'd turn yees against any other congregation in the diocess, or in the kingdom—ay, or against Dublin itself, if it was convanient."

Now, here was a *coup de main*—not a syllable mentioned about Jemmy M'Evoy until he had melted them down ready for the impression, which he accordingly made to his heart's content.

"Ay," he went on, "an' 'tis the parish of Ballysogarth that has the name, far and near, for both, and well they desarve it. You won't see the poor *gorsoon* go to a sthrange country with empty pockets. He's the son of an honest man—one of yourselves; and although he's a poor man, you know 'twas Yallow Sam that made him so—that put him out of his comfortable farm and slipped a black mouth[1] into it. You won't turn your backs on the son in regard of that, anyway. As for Sam, let him pass; he'll not grind the poor nor truckle to the rich when he gives up his stewardship in the kingdom come. Lave him to the friend of the poor—to his God; but the son of them that he oppressed, you will stand up for. He's going to Munster, to learn 'to go upon the Mission;' and on Sunday next there will be a collection made here and at the other two althars for him; and as your own

[1] A Presbyterian.

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characters are at stake, I trust it will be neither mane nor shabby. There will be Protestants here, I'll engage, and you must act dacently before them, if it was only to set them a good example. And now I'll tell yees a story that the mintion of the Protestants brings to my mind :—

"There was, you see, a Protestant man and a Catholic woman once married together. The man was a swearing, drinking, wicked rascal, and his wife the same; between them they were a blessed pair, to be sure. She never bent her knee under a priest until she was on her deathbed; nor was he known ever to enter a church door, nor to give a shilling in charity but once, that being as follows:—He was passing a Catholic place of worship one Sunday, on his way to fowl—for he had his dog and gun with him; 'twas beside a road, and many of the congregation were kneeling out across the way. Just as he passed they were making a collection for a poor scholar—and surely they that love the larning desarve to be encouraged! Well, behold you—says one of them, 'Will you remember the poor scholar,' says he, 'and put something in the hat? You don't know,' says he, 'but his prayers will be before you.'[1] 'True enough, maybe,' says the man, 'and there's a crown to him, for God's sake.' Well and good—the man died, and so did the wife; but the very day before her departure she got a scapular and died in it. She had one sister, however, a good crature, that did nothing but fast and pray, and make her sowl. This woman had strong doubts upon her mind, and was very much troubled as to whether or not her sister went to heaven; and she begged it as a favour from the Blessed Virgin that the state of her sister's sowl might be revealed to her. Her prayer was granted. One night, about a week after her death, her sister came back to her, dressed all in white, and circled round by a veil of glory.

"'Is that Mary?' said the living sister.

"'It is,' said the other; 'I have got liberty to appear to you,' says she, 'and to tell you that I'm happy.'

"'May the Holy Virgin be praised!' said the other. 'Mary dear, you have taken a great weight off of me,' says she; 'I thought you'd have a bad chance, in regard of the life you led.'

[1] In the other world.

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"'When I died,' said the spirit, 'and was on my way to the other world, I came to a place where the road divided itself into three parts—one to heaven, another to hell, and a third to purgatory. There was a dark gulf between me and heaven, and a breach between me and purgatory that I couldn't step across, and if I had missed my foot there, I would have dropped into hell. So I would, too, only that the Blessed Virgin put my own scapular over the breach, and it became firm, and I stepped on it and got over. The Virgin then desired me to look into hell, and the first person I saw was my own husband, standing with a green sod under his feet. "He got that favour," said the Blessed Virgin, "in consequence of the prayers of a holy priest, that had once been a poor scholar, that he gave assistance to at a collection made for him in such a chapel," says she. Then,' continued the sowl, 'Sister,' says she, 'but there's some great change in the world since I died, or why would the people live so long? It can't be less than six thousand years since I departed, and yet I find every one of my friends just as I left them.'

"'Why,' replied the living sister, 'you're only six days dead.'

"'Ah, *avourneen!*' said the other, 'it can't be—it can't be! for I have been thousands on thousands of years in pain!' and as she spoke this she disappeared.

"Now, there's proof of the pains of purgatory, where one day seems as long as a thousand years; and you know we oughtn't to grudge a thrifle to a fellow-crature, that we may avoid it. So you see, my friends, there's nothing like good works. You know not when or where this lad's prayers may benefit you. If he gets ordained, the first mass he says will be for his benefactors; and in every one he celebrates after that, they must also be remembered: the words are—*pro omnibus benefactoribus meis, per omnia secula seculorum!*

"Thirdly—hem—I now lave the thing to yourselves.

"But wasn't I a match for Pether Donovan, that would break a stone for the marrow [1]—eh?—(a broad laugh at

[1] I know not whether this may be considered worthy of a note or not. I have myself frequently seen and tasted what is appropriately termed by the peasantry, "Stone Marrow." It is found in the heart of a kind of soft granite, or perhaps I should rather say freestone. The country people use it medicinally, but I cannot remember what particular

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Pether's rueful visage.)—Pether, you Turk, will your heart never soften—will you never have dacency, an' you the only man of your family that's so? Sure, they say you're going to be marrid some of these days. Well, if you get your wife in my parish, I tell you, Peter, I'll give you a fleecin', for don't think I'll marry you as chape as I would a poor honest man. I'll make you shell out the yallow boys, and 'tis that will go to your heart, you nager, you; and then I'll eat you out of house and home at the stations. May the Lord grant us, in the manetime, a dacent appetite, a blessing which I wish you all in the name of the" &c.

At this moment the congregation was once more in convulsions of laughter at the dressing which Peter, whose character was drawn with much truth and humour, received at the hands of the worthy pastor.

Our readers will perceive that there was not a single prejudice, or weakness, or virtue in the disposition of his auditory left untouched in this address. He moved their superstition, their pride of character, their dread of hell and purgatory, their detestation of Yellow Sam, and the remembrance of the injury so wantonly inflicted on M'Evoy's family; he glanced at the advantage to be derived from the lad's prayers, the example they should set to Protestants, made a passing hit at tithes, and indulged in the humorous, the pathetic, and the miraculous. In short, he left no avenue to their hearts untouched; and in the process by which he attempted to accomplish his object he was successful.

There is, in fact, much rude, unpolished eloquence among the Roman Catholic priesthood, and not a little which, if duly cultivated by study and a more liberal education, would deserve to be ranked very high.

We do not give this as a specimen of their modern pulpit eloquence, but as a sample of that in which some of those

disease it is said to cure. It is a soft saponaceous substance, not unpleasant to the taste, of a bluish colour, and melts in the mouth like the fat of cold meat, leaving the palate greasy. How far an investigation into its nature and properties might be useful to the geologist or physician it is not for me to conjecture. As the fact appeared to be a curious one, and necessary, moreover, to illustrate the expression used in the text, I thought it not amiss to mention it. It may be a *bonne bouche* for the geologists.

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Irish clergy shone, who, before the establishment of Maynooth, were admitted to orders immediately from the hedge schools, in consequence of the dearth of priests which then existed in Ireland. It was customary in those days to ordain them even before they departed for the Continental colleges, in order that they might, by saying masses and performing other clerical duties, be enabled to add something to the scanty pittance which was appropriated to their support. Of the class to which Father Kavanagh belonged, there are few, if any, remaining. They sometimes were called "hedge priests,"[1] by way of reproach; though, for our own part, we wish their non-interference in politics, unaffected piety, and simplicity of character had remained behind them.

On the Sunday following, Dominick M'Evoy and his son Jemmy attended mass, whilst the other members of the family, with that sense of honest pride which is more strongly inherent in Irish character than is generally supposed, remained at home, from a reluctance to witness what they could not but consider a degradation. This decency of feeling was anticipated by the priest, and not overlooked by the people; for the former, the reader may have observed, in the whole course of his address never once mentioned the word "charity;" nor did the latter permit the circumstance to go without its reward, according to the best of their ability. So keen and delicate are the perceptions of the Irish, and so acutely alive are they to those nice distinctions of kindness and courtesy, which have in their hearts a spontaneous and sturdy growth that mocks at the stunted virtues of artificial life.

In the parish of Ballysogarth there were three altars, or places of Roman Catholic worship; and the reader may suppose that the collection made at each place was considerable. In truth, both father and son's anticipations were far under the sum collected. Protestants and Presbyterians attended with their contributions, and those of the latter who scrupled to be present at what they considered to be an idolatrous worship did not hesitate to send their quota by

[1] This nickname was first bestowed upon them by the Continental priests, who generally ridiculed them for their vulgarity. They were, for the most part, simple but worthy men.

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some Roman Catholic neighbour. Their names were accordingly announced with an encomium from the priest, which never failed to excite a warm-hearted murmur of approbation. Nor was this feeling transient; for we will venture to say that had political excitement flamed up even to rebellion and mutual slaughter, the persons and property of those individuals would have been held sacred.

At length Jemmy was equipped; and sad and heavy became the hearts of his parents and immediate relations as the morning appointed for his departure drew nigh. On the evening before, several of his more distant relatives came to take their farewell of him, and in compliance with the usages of Irish hospitality, they were detained for the night. They did not, however, come empty-handed: some brought money; some brought linen, stockings, or small presents—"Jist, Jemmy *asthore*, to keep me in yer memory, sure—an' nothin' else, *mavourneen*."

Except Jemmy himself, and one of his brothers, who was to accompany him part of the way, none of the family slept. The mother exhibited deep sorrow, and Dominick, although he made a show of firmness, felt, now that the crisis was at hand, nearly incapable of parting with the boy. The conversation of their friends, and the cheering effects of the *poteen*, enabled them to sustain his loss better than they otherwise would have done, and the hope of seeing him one day "an ordained priest" contributed more than either to support them.

When the night was nearly half spent, the mother took a candle and privately withdrew to the room in which the boy slept. The youth was fair, and interesting to look upon—the clustering locks of his white forehead were divided; yet there was on his otherwise open brow a shade of sorrow, produced by the coming separation, which even sleep could not efface. The mother held the candle gently towards his face, shading it with one hand, lest the light might suddenly awake him; she then surveyed his features long and affectionately, whilst the tears fell in showers from her cheeks.

"There you lie," she softly sobbed out in Irish, "the sweet pulse of your mother's heart, the flower of our flock, the pride of our eyes, and the music of our hearth! Jemmy,

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avourneen machree, an' how can I part wid you, my darlin' son! Sure, when I look at your mild face, and think that you're takin' the world on your head to rise us out of our poverty, isn't my heart breakin'? A lonely house we'll have afther you, *acushla!* Goin' out an' comin' in, at home or abroad, your voice won't be in my ears, nor your eye smilin' upon me! An' thin to think of what you may suffer in a sthrange land! If your head aches, on what tendher breast will it lie? or who will bind the ribbon of comfort[1] round it? or wipe your fair mild brow in sickness? Oh, Blessed Mother, hunger, sickness, and sorrow may come upon you when you'll be far from your own an' from them that loves you!"

This melancholy picture was too much for the tenderness of the mother; she sat down beside the bed, rested her face on her open hand, and wept in subdued but bitter grief. At this moment his father, who probably suspected the cause of her absence, came in, and perceived her distress.

"Vara," said he, in Irish also, "is my darlin' son asleep?"

She looked up with streaming eyes as he spoke, and replied to him with difficulty, whilst she involuntarily held over the candle to gratify the father's heart by a sight of him.

"I was keepin' him before my eye," she said. "God knows but it may be the last night we'll ever see him undher our own roof! Dominick, *achora,* I doubt I can't part wid him from my heart."

"Then how can I, Vara?" he replied. "Wasn't he my right hand in everything? When was he from me, ever since he took a man's work upon him? And when he'd finish his own task for the day, how kindly he'd begin an' help me wid mine! No, Vara, it goes to my heart to let him go away upon sich a plan, an' I wish he hadn't taken the notion into his head at all."

"It's not too late, maybe," replied his mother. "I think it wouldn't be hard to put him off of it; the crathur's own heart's failin' him to lave us—he has sorrow upon his face where he lies."

[1] This alludes to a charm performed by certain persons, which, by means of a ribbon, is said in Ireland to cure headaches. It is called "measuring the head."

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The father looked at the expression of affectionate melancholy which shaded his features as he slept; and the perception of the boy's internal struggle against his own domestic attachments in accomplishing his first determination, powerfully touched his heart.

"Vara," said he, "I know the boy—he won't give it up; and 'twould be a pity—maybe a sin—to put him from it. Let the child get fair play, an' thry his coorse. If he fails, he can come back to us, an' our arms and hearts will be open to welcome him! But if God prospers him, wouldn't it be a blessin' that we never expected, to see him in the white robes, celebratin' one mass for his paarents. If these ould eyes could see that, I would be contínted to close them in pace an' happiness for ever."

"An' well you'd become them, *avourneen machree!* Well would your mild and handsome countenance look wid the long heavenly stole of innocence upon you! and although it's atin' into my heart, I'll bear it for the sake of seein' the same blessed sight. Look at that face, Dominick—mightn't many a lord of the land be proud to have such a son? May the heavens shower down its blessin' upon him!"

The father burst into tears. "It is—it is!" said he—"it is the face that ud make many a noble heart proud to look at it! Is it any wondher it ud cut our hearts, thin, to have it taken from afore our eyes? Come away, Vara—come away, o I'll not be able to part wid it. It is the lovely face—an' kind is the heart of my darlin' child." As he spoke he stooped down and kissed the youth's cheek, on which the warm tears of affection fell soft as the dew from heaven. The mother followed his example, and they both left the room.

"We must bear it," said Dominick, as they passed into another apartment; "the money's gathered, an' it wouldn't look well to be goin' back wid it to them that befrinded us. We'd have the blush upon our face for it, an' the child no advantage."

"Thrue for you, Dominick; and we must make up our minds to live widout him for a while."

The following morning was dark and cloudy, but calm and without rain. When the family were all assembled, every member of it evinced traces of deep feeling, and every eye

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was fixed upon the serene but melancholy countenance of the boy with tenderness and sorrow. He himself maintained a quiet equanimity, which, though apparently liable to be broken by the struggles of domestic affection, and in character with his meek and unassuming disposition, yet was supported by more firmness than might be expected from a mind in which kindness and sensibility were so strongly predominant. At this time, however, his character was not developed, or, at least, not understood by those that surrounded him. To strong feelings and enduring affections he added a keenness of perception and a bitterness of invective, of which, in his conversation with his father concerning Yellow Sam, the reader has already had sufficient proofs. At breakfast little or nothing was eaten: the boy himself could not taste a morsel, nor any other person in the family. When the form of the meal was over, the father knelt down. "It's right," said he, "that we should all go to our knees, and join in a Rosary in behalf of the child that's goin' on a good intintion. He won't thrive the worse bekase the last words that he'll hear from his father and mother's lips is a prayer for bringin' the blessin' of God down upon his endayvours."

This was accordingly performed, though not without tears and sobs and frequent demonstrations of grief; for religion among the peasantry is often associated with bursts of deep and powerful feeling.

When the prayer was over, the boy rose, and calmly strapped to his back a satchel covered with deer-skin, containing a few books, linen, and a change of very plain apparel. While engaged in this, the uproar of grief in the house was perfectly heartrending. When just ready to set out, he reverently took off his hat, knelt down, and with tears streaming from his eyes, craved humbly and meekly the blessing and forgiveness of his father and mother. The mother caught him in her arms, kissed his lips, and kneeling also, sobbed out a fervent benediction upon his head; the father now, in the grief of a strong man, pressed him to his heart, until the big burning tears fell upon the boy's face; his brothers and sisters embraced him wildly; next his more distant relations; and lastly, the neighbours who were crowded about the door. After this he took a light staff in

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his hand, and first blessing himself after the form of his Church, proceeded to a strange land in quest of education.

He had not gone more than a few perches from the door when his mother followed him with a small bottle of holy water. "Jemmy, *alanna voght*," said she, "here's this, an' carry it about you—it will keep evil from you; an' be sure to take good care of the written correckther you got from the priest and Square Benson; an', darlin', don't be lookin' too often at the cuff o' your coat, for feard the people might get a notion that you have the bank-notes sewed in it. An', Jemmy *agra*, don't be too lavish upon their Munster crame; they say it's apt to give people the ague. Kiss me agin, *agra*; an' the heavens above keep you safe and well till we see you once more!"

She then tenderly, and still with melancholy pride, settled his shirt collar, which she thought did not sit well about his neck; and kissing him again, with renewed sorrow, left him to pursue his journey.

M'Evoy's house was situated on the side of a dark hill —one of that barren description which can be called neither inland nor mountain. It commanded a wide and extended prospect, and the road along which the lad travelled was visible for a considerable distance from it. On a small hillock before the door sat Dominick and his wife, who, as long as their son was visible, kept their eyes, which were nearly blinded with tears, riveted upon his person. It was now they gave full vent to their grief, and discussed, with painful and melancholy satisfaction, all the excellent qualities which he possessed. As Jemmy himself advanced, one neighbour after another fell away from the train which accompanied him, not, however, until they had affectionately embraced and bid him adieu, and perhaps slipped with peculiar delicacy an additional mite into his waistcoat pocket. After the neighbours, then followed the gradual separation from his friends—one by one left him, as in the great journey of life, and in a few hours he found himself accompanied only by his favourite brother.

This to him was the greatest trial he had yet felt; long and heart-rending was their embrace. Jemmy soothed and comforted his beloved brother, but in vain. The lad threw

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himself on the spot at which they parted, and remained there until Jemmy turned an angle of the road which brought him out of his sight, when the poor boy kissed the marks of his brother's feet repeatedly, and then returned home, hoarse and broken down with the violence of his grief.

He was now alone, and for the first time felt keenly the strange object on which he was bent, together with all the difficulties connected with its attainment. He was young and uneducated, and many years, he knew, must elapse ere he could find himself in possession of his wishes. But time would pass at home, as well as abroad, he thought; and as there lay no impediment of peculiar difficulty in his way, he collected all his firmness and proceeded.

There is no country on the earth in which either education, or the desire to procure it, is so much reverenced as in Ireland. Next to the claims of the priest and schoolmaster come those of the poor scholar for the respect of the people. It matters not how poor or how miserable he may be; so long as they see him struggling with poverty in the prosecution of a purpose so laudable, they will treat him with attention and kindness. Here there is no danger of his being sent to the workhouse, committed as a vagrant, or passed from parish to parish until he reaches his own settlement. Here the humble lad is not met by the sneer of purse-proud insolence, or his simple tale answered only by the frown of heartless contempt. No—no—no. The best bit and sup are placed before him; and whilst his poor but warm-hearted entertainer can afford only potatoes and salt to his own half-starved family, he will make a struggle to procure something better for the poor scholar, "bekase he's far from his own, the crathur! An' sure the intintion in him is good, anyhow—the Lord prosper him, an' every one that has the heart set upon the larnin'!"

As Jemmy proceeded, he found that his satchel of books and apparel gave as clear an intimation of his purpose as if he had carried a label to that effect upon his back.

"God save you, *abouchal!*" said a warm, honest-looking countryman whom he met driving home his cows in the evening, within a few miles of the town in which he proposed to sleep.

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"God save you kindly!"

"Why, thin, 'tis a long journey you have before you, *alanna*, for I know well it's for Munster you're bound."

"Thrue for you; 'tis there, wid the help of God, I'm goin'. A great scarcity of larnin' was in my own place, or I wouldn't have to go at all," said the boy, whilst his eyes filled with tears.

"'Tis no discredit in life," replied the countryman, with untaught natural delicacy; for he perceived that a sense of pride lingered about the boy, which made the character of poor scholar sit painfully upon him—"'tis no discredit, dear, nor don't be cast down. I'll warrant you that God will prosper you; an' that He may, *avick*, I pray this day!" and as he spoke he raised his hat in reverence to the Being whom he involved. "An' tell me, dear—where do you intend to sleep to-night?"

"In the town forrid here," replied Jemmy. "I'm in hopes I'll be able to reach it before dark."

"Pooh! asy you will. Have you any friends or acquaintances there that ud welcome you, *abouchal dhas?*"

"No, indeed," said Jemmy, "they're all strangers to me; but I can stop in 'dhry lodgin',' for it's chaper."

"Well, *alanna*, I believe you; but I'm no stranger to you, so come home wid me to-night, where you'll get a good bed, an' betther thratement nor in any of their dhry lodgins. Give me your books, an' I'll carry them for you. Ethen, but you have a great batch o' them entirely. Can you make any hand o' the Latin at all yet?"

"No, indeed," replied Jemmy, somewhat sorrowfully; "I didn't ever open a Latin book, at all, at all."

"Well, *acushla*, everything has a beginnin'; you won't be so long. An' I know by your face that you'll be bright at it, an' a credit to them that owes[1] you. There's my house in the fields beyant, where you'll be well kept for one night, anyway, or for twinty, or for ten times twinty, if you wanted them."

The honest farmer then commenced the song of *Colleen dhas Crotha na Mho*, which he sang in a clear, mellow voice until they reached the house.

[1] Owns.

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"Alley," said the man to his wife, on entering, "here's a stranger I've brought you."

"Well," replied Alley, "he's welcome sure, anyway. *Cead millia failta ghud, alanna!* sit over to the fire. Brian, get up, dear," said she to one of the children, "an' let the stranger to the hob."

"He's goin' on a good errand, the Lord bless him!" said the husband—"up the country for the larnin'. Put thim books over on the settle; an' whin the *girshas* are done milkin', give him a brave dhrink of the sweet milk; it's the stuff to thravel on."

"Throth, an' I will, wid a heart an' a half, wishin' it was betther I had to give him. Here, Nelly, put down a pot o' wather, an' lave soap an' a *praskeen*, afore you go to milk, till I bathe the dacent boy's feet. Sore an' tired they are after his journey, poor young crathur."

When Jemmy placed himself upon the hob, he saw that some peculiarly good fortune had conducted him to so comfortable a resting-place. He considered this as a good omen, and felt, in fact, much relieved, for the sense of loneliness among strangers was removed.

The house evidently belonged to a wealthy farmer, well to do in the world. The chimney was studded with sides upon sides of yellow smoke-dried bacon, hams, and hung beef in abundance. The kitchen tables were large, and white as milk; and the dresser rich in its shining array of delf and pewter. Everything, in fact, was upon a large scale. Huge meal-chests were ranged on one side, and two or three settle-beds on the other, conspicuous for their uncommon cleanliness; whilst hung from the ceiling were the *glaiks*, a machine for churning; and beside the dresser stood an immense churn, certainly too unwieldy to be managed except by machinery. The farmer was a ruddy-faced Milesian, who wore a drab frieze coat, with a velvet collar, buff waistcoat, corduroy small-clothes, and top-boots well greased from the tops down.[1] He was not only an agriculturist, but a grazier remarkable for shrewdness and good sense, generally attended fairs and

[1] This, almost in every instance, is the dress of a wealthy Irish farmer.

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markets, and brought three or four large droves of fat cattle to England every year. From his fob hung the brass chain and almost rusty key of a watch, which he kept certainly more for use than ornament.

"A little sup o' this," said he, "won't take your life," approaching Jemmy with a bottle of as good *poteen* as ever escaped the eye of an exciseman; "it'll refresh you — for you're tired, or I wouldn't offer it; it's rason that one bint on what you're bint on oughtn't to be makin' freedoms wid the same dhrink. But there's a time for everything, an' there's a time for this. Thank you, *agra*," he added, in reply to Jemmy, who had drunk his health. "Now, don't be frettin'— but make yourself as aisy as if you were at your own father's hearth. You'll have everything to your heart's contint for this night. The carts are goin' into the market to-morrow arly—you can sit upon them, an' maybe you'll get somethin' more nor you expect! Sure, the Lord has given it to me, an' why wouldn't I share it wid them that wants it more nor I do?"

The lad's heart yearned to the generous farmer, for he felt that his kindness had the stamp of truth and sincerity upon it. He could only raise his eyes in a silent prayer that none belonging to him might ever be compelled, as strangers and wayfarers, to commit themselves, as he did, to the casualties of life, in pursuit of those attainments which poverty cannot otherwise command. Fervent, indeed, was his prayer; and certain we are that, because it was sincere, it must have been heard.

In the meantime, the good woman, or *vanithee*, had got the pot of water warmed, in which Jemmy was made to put his feet. She then stripped up her arms to the elbows, and with soap and seedy meal, affectionately bathed his legs and feet; then taking the *praskeen*, or coarse towel, she wiped them with a kindness which thrilled to his heart.

"And now," said she, "I must give you a cure for blisthers, an' it's this:—In the mornin', if we're all spared, as we will, plase the Almighty, I'll give you a needle an' some white woollen thread well soaped. When your blisthers gets up, dhraw the soapy thread through them, clip it on each side, an', my life for yours, they won't throuble you. Sure, I thried

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it the year I went on my station to Lough Derg, an' I know it to be the rale cure."

"Here, Nelly," said the farmer—who sat with a placid, benevolent face, smoking his pipe on the opposite hob—to one of the maids who came in from milking—"bring up a noggin of that milk, we want it here: let it be none of your washy foremilk, but the strippins, Nelly, that has the strinth in it. Up wid it here, *a colleen*."

"The never a one o' the man but's doatin' downright, so he is," observed the wife, "to go to fill the tired child's stomach wid plash. Can't you wait till he ates a thrifle o' somethin' stout, to keep life in him, after his hard journey? Does your feet feel themselves cool an' asy now, *ahagur*?"

"Indeed," said Jemmy, "I'm almost as fresh as when I set out. 'Twas little thought I had, when I came away this mornin', that I'd meet wid so much friendship on my journey. I hope it's a sign that God's on my side in my undertakin'!"

"I hope so, *avourneen*—I hope so; an' it is, too," replied the farmer, taking the pipe out of his mouth, and mildly whiffing away the smoke; "an' God 'ill be always on your side as long as your intentions are good. Now ate somethin'—you must want it by this; an' thin, when you rest yourself bravely, take a tass into a good feather-bed, where you can sleep rings around you.[1] Who knows but you'll be able to say mass for me or some o' my family yit. God grant that, anyway, *avick!*"

Poor Jemmy's heart was too full to eat much; he took, therefore, only a very slender portion of the refreshments set before him; but his hospitable entertainers had no notion of permitting him to use the free exercise of his discretion on this important point. When Jemmy put away the knife and fork, as an indication of his having concluded the meal, the farmer and his wife turned about, both at the same moment, with a kind of astonishment.

"Eh? is it givin' over that way you are? Why, *alanna*, it's nothin' at all you've tuck; sure, little Brian there would make a fool of you, so he would, at the atin'. Come, come, *abouchal*—don't be ashamed, or make any way sthrange at all, but ate hearty."

[1] As much as you please.

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"I declare I have ate heartily, thank you," replied Jemmy—"oceans itself, so I did. I couldn't swally a bit more if the house was full."

"*Arrah*, Brian," said the wife, "cut him up more o' that hung beef; it's ashamed the crathur is! Take it, *avick;* don't we know the journey you had? Faix, if one o' the boys was out on a day's thravellin', you'd see how he'd handle himself."

"Indeed," said Jemmy, "I can't—if I could I would. Sure, I would be no way backward at all, so I wouldn't."

"Throth, an' you can an' must," said the farmer—"the never a rise you'll rise till you finish that"—putting over a complement out of all reasonable proportion with his age and size.

"There now's a small taste, an' you must finish it. To go to ate nothin' at all! Hut tut! by the tops o' my boots, you must put that clear an' clane out o' sight, or I'll go mad and burn them."

The lad recommenced, and continued to eat as long as he could possibly hold out; at length he ceased.

"I can't go on," said he—"don't ax me—I can't, indeed."

"Bad manners to the word I'll hear till you finish it; you know it's but a thrifle to spake of. Thry agin, *avick*, but take your time; you'll be able for it."

The poor lad's heart was engaged on other thoughts and other scenes—his home and its beloved inmates; sorrow, and the gush of young affections, were ready to burst forth.

"I cannot ate," said he, and he looked imploringly on the farmer and his wife, whilst the tears started to his eyes—"don't ax me, for my heart's wid them I left behind me, that I may never see agin;" and he wept in a burst of grief which he could not restrain.

Neither the strength nor tenderness of the lad's affection was unappreciated by this excellent couple. In a moment the farmer's wife was also in tears; nor did her husband break the silence for some minutes.

"The Almighty pity an' strengthen him!" said the wife; "but he has the good an' the kind heart, an' would be a credit to any family. Whisht, *acushla machree*—whisht, we won't ax you to ate—no, indeed. It was out o' kindness we

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did it. Don't be cast down aither; sure, it isn't the ocean you're crossin', but goin' from one county like to another. God'll guard an' take care o' you, so He will. Your intintion's good, an' He'll prosper it."

"He will, *avick*," said the farmer himself—"He will. Cheer up, my good boy! I know thim that's larned an' creditable clargy this day, that went as you're goin'—ay, an' that ris an' helped their parents, an' put them above poverty an' distress; an' never fear, wid a blessing, but you'll do the same."

"That's what brings me at all," replied the boy, drying his tears; "if I was once able to take them out o' their distresses I'd be happy—only I'm afeard the cares o' the world will break my father's heart before I have it in my power to assist him."

"No such thing, darlin'," said the good woman. "Sure, his hopes out o' you an' his love for you will keep him up; an' you dunna but God may give him a blessin' too, *avick*."

"Mix another sup o' that for him," said the farmer—"he's low-spirited, an' it's too strong to give him any more of it as it is. Childher, where's the masther from us—eh? Why, thin, God help them, the crathurs—wasn't it thoughtful o' them to lave the place while he was at his dinner, for fraid he'd be dashed—manin' them young crathurs, Alley. But can you tell us where the masther is? Isn't this his night wid us? I know he tuck his dinner here."

"Ay did he; but it's up to Larry Murphy's he's gone, to thry his son in his book-keepin'. *Mavrone*, but he had time enough to put him well through it afore this, anyway."

As she spoke, a short, thick-set man, with black twinkling eyes and ruddy cheeks, entered. This personage was no other than the schoolmaster of that district, who circulated, like a newspaper, from one farmer's house to another, in order to expound for his kind entertainers the news of the day, his own learning, and the very evident extent of their ignorance.

The moment he came in the farmer and his wife rose with an air of much deference, and placed a chair for him exactly opposite the fire, leaving a respectful distance on each side, within which no illiterate mortal durst presume to sit.

"Misther Corcoran," said the farmer, presenting Jemmy's

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satchel, through which the shapes of the books were quite plain, "*thig in thu shinn?*" and as he spoke he looked significantly at its owner.

"Ah!" replied the man of letters, "*thigum, thigum.* God be wid the day when I carried the likes of it. 'Tis a badge of polite genius, that no boy need be ashamed of. So, my young suckling of litherature, you're bound for Munster?—for that counthry where the swallows fly in conic sections—where the magpies and the turkeys confab in Latin, and the cows and bullocks will roar you Doric Greek—bo-a-o—*clamo.* What's your pathronymic?—*quo nomine gowdes, Domine doctissime?*"

The lad was silent; but the farmer's wife turned up the whites of her eyes with an expression of wonder and surprise at the erudition of the "masther."

"I persave you are as yet uninitiated into the elementary *principia* of the languages; well—the honour is still before you. What's your name?"

"James M'Evoy, sir."

Just now the farmer's family began to assemble round the spacious hearth: the young lads, whose instruction the worthy teacher claimed as his own peculiar task, came timidly forward, together with two or three pretty bashful girls, with sweet flashing eyes, and countenances full of feeling and intelligence. Behind, on the settles, half a dozen servants of both sexes sat in pairs—each boy placing himself beside his favourite girl. These appeared to be as strongly interested in the learned conversation which the master held as if they were masters and mistresses of Munster Latin and Doric Greek themselves; but an occasional thump cautiously bestowed by no slender female hand upon the sturdy shoulder of her companion, or a dry cough from one of the young men, fabricated to drown the coming blow, gave slight indications that they contrived to have a little amusement among themselves, altogether independent of Mr. Corcoran's erudition.

When the latter came in, Jemmy was taking the tumbler of punch which the farmer's wife had mixed for him; on this he fixed an expressive glance, which instantly reverted to the *vanithee,* and from her to the large bottle which stood in a window to the right of the fire. It is a quick eye, however, that can anticipate Irish hospitality.

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"Alley," said the farmer, ere the wife had time to comply with the hint conveyed by the black, twinkling eye of the schoolmaster—"why, Alley——"

"Sure, I am," she replied, "an' will have it for you in less than no time."

She accordingly addressed herself to the bottle, and in a few minutes handed a reeking jug of punch to the *farithee*, or good man.

"Come, masther, by the hand o' my body, I don't like dhry talk so long as I can get anything to moisten the discoorse. Here's your health, masther," continued the farmer, winking at the rest, "and a speedy conclusion to what you know! In throth, she's the pick of a good girl—not to mintion what she has for her portion. I'm a frind to the same family, and will put a spoke in your wheel, masther, that'll sarve you."

"Oh, Mr. Lanigan, very well, sir—very well—you're becoming quite facetious upon me," said the little man, rather confused; "but upon my credit and reputation, except the amorous inclination in regard to me is on her side"—and he looked sheepishly at his hands—"I can't say that the arrows of Cupid have as yet pinethrated the sintimintal side of my heart. It is not wid me as it was wid Dido—hem—

'Non hæret lateri lethalis arundo,'

as Virgil says. Yet I can't say, but if a friend were to become spokesman for me, and insinuate in my behalf a small taste of amorous sintimintality, why—hem, hem, hem! The company's health! Lad James M'Evoy, your health, and success to you, my good boy!—hem, hem!"

"Here's wishin' him the same!" said the farmer.

"James," said the schoolmaster, "you are goin' to Munsther, an' I can say that I have travelled it from end to end, not to a bad purpose, I hope—hem! Well, *abouchal*, there are hard days and nights before you, so keep a firm heart. If you have money, as 'tis likely you have, don't let a single rap of it into the hands of the schoolmaster, although the first thing he'll do will be to bring you home to his own house, and palaver you night an' day, till he succeeds in persuading you to leave

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it in his hands for security. You might, if not duly pre-admonished, surrender it to his solicitations, for

'Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.'

Michael, what case is *mortalium*?" added he, suddenly addressing one of the farmer's sons. "Come now, Michael, where's your brightness? What case is *mortalium*?"

The boy was taken by surprise, and for a few minutes could not reply.

"Come, man," said the father, "be sharp, spake out bravely, an' don't be afeard: nor don't be in a hurry aither; we'll wait for you."

"Let him alone—let him alone," said Corcoran; "I'll face the same boy agin the country for 'cuteness. If he doesn't expound that, I'll never consthre a line of Latin, or Greek, or Masoretic, while I'm livin'."

His cunning master knew right well that the boy, who was only confused at the suddenness of the question, would feel no difficulty in answering it to his satisfaction. Indeed, it was impossible for him to miss it, as he was then reading the seventh book of Virgil, and the fourth of Homer. It is, however, a trick with such masters to put simple questions of that nature to their pupils, when at the houses of their parents, as knotty and difficult, and when they are answered, to assume an air of astonishment at the profound reach of thought displayed by the pupil.

When Michael recovered himself he instantly replied, "*Mortalium* is the ginitive case of *nemo*, by '*Nomina Partitiva.*'"

Corcoran laid down the tumbler, which he was in the act of raising to his lips, and looked at the lad with an air of surprise and delight, then at the farmer and his wife, alternately, and shook his head with much mystery. "Michael," said he to the lad, "will you go out, and tell us what the night's doin'?"

The boy accordingly went out. "Why," said Corcoran, in his absence, "if ever there was a phanix, that boy will be the bird—an Irish phanix he will be—a

'Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno!'

There's no batin' him at anything he undhertakes. Why,

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there's thim that are makin' good bread by their larnin', that couldn't resolve that; and you all saw how he did it widout the book! Why, if he goes on at this rate, I'm afraid he'll soon be too many for myself!—hem!"

"Too many for yourself! Fill the masther's tumbler, Alley. Too many for yourself! No, no! I doubt he'll never see that day, bright as he is, an' 'cute. That's it—put a hape upon it. Give me your hand, masther. I thank you for your attintion to him; an' the boy is a credit to us. Come over, Michael, *avourneen*. Here, take what's in this tumbler, an' finish it. Be a good boy, an' mind your lessons, an' do everything the masther here—the Lord bless him!—bids you, an' you'll never want a frind, masther, nor a dinner, nor a bed, nor a guinea, while the Lord spares me aither the one or the other."

"I know it, Mr. Lanigan, I know it; and I will make that boy the pride o' Ireland, if I'm spared. I'll show him *cramboes* that would puzzle the great Scaliger himself; and many other difficulties I'll let him into that I have never let out yet, except to Tim Kearney, that bate them all at Thrinity College up in Dublin, last June."

"*Arrah*, how was that, masther?"

"Tim, you see, went in to his entrance examinayshuns, and one of the Fellows came to examine him, but a divil a long time it was till Tim sacked him.

"'Go back agin,' says Tim, 'and sind some one that's able to tache me, for you're not.'

"So another greater scholar agin came to thry Tim, and did thry him, and Tim made a hare of him, before all that was in the place—five or six thousand ladies and gintlemen, at laste!

"The great larned Fellows thin began to look odd enough; so they picked out the best scholar among them but one, and slipped him at Tim; but well-becomes Tim, the never a long it was till he had him, too, as dumb as a post. The Fellow went back.

"'Gintlemen,' says he to the rest, 'we'll be disgraced all out,' says he; 'for except the Prowost sacks that Munsther *spalpeen*, he'll bate us all, an' we'll never be able to hould up our heads afther.'

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"Accordingly, the Prowost attacks Tim; and such a meetin' as they had never was seen in Thrinity College since its establishment. At last, when they had been nine hours and a half at it, the Prowost put one word to him that Tim couldn't expound, so he lost it by one word only. For the last two hours the Prowost carried an the examinayshun in Hebrew, thinking, you see, that he had Tim there; but he was mistaken, for Tim answered him in good Munsther Irish, and it so happened that they understood each other, for the two languages are first cousins, or, at all evints, close blood relations. Tim was then pronounced to be the best scholar in Ireland except the Prowost; though, among ourselves, they might have thought of the man that taught him. That, however, wasn't all. A young lady fell in love wid Tim, and is to make him a present of herself and her great fortune (three estates) the moment he becomes a counsellor; and in the meantime she allows him thirty pounds a year to bear his expenses and live like a gintleman.

"Now to return to the youth in the corner: *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.* Jemmy, keep your money, or give it to the priest to keep, and it will be safest; but by no means let the Hyblean honey of the schoolmaster's blarney deprive you of it, otherwise it will be a *vale, vale, longum vale* between you. *Crede experto!*"

"Masther," said the farmer, "many a strange accident you met wid on yer thravels through Munsther?"

"No doubt of that, Mr. Lanigan. I and another boy thravelled it in society together. One day we were walking towards a gintleman's house on the roadside, and it happened that we met the owner of it in the vicinity, although we didn't know him to be such.

"'*Salvete Domini!*' said he, in good fresh Latin.

"'*Tu sis salvus, quoque?*' said I to him, for my comrade wasn't 'cute, an' I was always an orathor.

"'*Unde venitis?*' said he, comin' over us wid another deep piece of larnin', the construction of which was, 'Where do yees come from?'

"I replied, '*Per varios casus et tot discrimina rerum, venimus a Mayo.*'

"'Good!' said he; 'you're bright; follow me.'

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"So he brought us over to his own house, and ordered us bread and cheese and a posset; for it was Friday, an' we couldn't touch mate. He, in the manetime, sat an' chatted along wid us. The thievin' cook, however, in making the posset, kept the curds to herself, except a slight taste, here and there, that floated on the top; but she was liberal enough of the whey, anyhow.

"Now, I had been well trained to fishing in my more youthful days, and no *gorsoon* could grope a trout wid me. I accordingly sent the spoon through the pond before me wid the skill of a connoisseur; but to no purpose—it came up wid nothin' but the whey.

"So said I off-hand to the gintleman, houlding up the bowl, and looking at it with a disappointed face—

'"*Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.*"

This,' says I, 'plase your hospitality, may be Pactolus, but divil a taste o' the proper sand is in the bottom of it.'

"The wit of this, you see, pleased him, and we got an excellent treat in his *studium*, or study; for he was determined to give myself another trial.

"'What's the wickedest line in Virgil?' said he.

"Now, I had Virgil at my finger ends, so I answered him—

'"*Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo.*"'

"'Very good,' said he; 'you have the genius, and will come to somethin' yet. Now tell me the most moral line in Virgil.

"I answered—

'"*Discere justitiam moniti, et non temnere divos.*"'

"'Depend upon it,' said he, 'you will be a luminary. The morning star will be but a farthing candle to you; and if you take in the learning as you do the cheese, in a short time there won't be a man in Munsther fit to teach you,' and he laughed, for you see he had a tendency to jocosity.

"He did not give me up here, however, being determined to go deeper wid me.

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"'Can you translate a newspaper into Latin prose?' said he.

"Now the divil a one o' me was just then sure about the prose, so I was goin' to tell him; but before I had time to speak, he thrust the paper into my hand, and desired me to thranslate half a dozen barbarous advertisements.

"The first that met me was about a reward offered for a Newfoundland dog and a terrier that had been stolen from a fishing-tackle manufacturer, and then came a list of his shabby merchandise, ending with a long-winded encomium upon his gunpowder, shot, and double-barrelled guns. Now may I be shot wid a blank cartridge if I ever felt so much at an amplush in my life, and I said so.

"'Your honour has hooked me wid the fishing-hooks,' said I; 'but I grant the cheese was good bait, anyhow.'

"So he laughed heartily, and bid me go on.

"Well, I thought the first was difficult; but the second was Masoretic to it—something about drawbacks, excisemen, and a long custom-house list, that would puzzle Publius Virgilius Maro if he was set to translate it. However, I went through wid it as well as I could: where I couldn't find Latin, I laid in the Greek, and where the Greek failed me, I gave the Irish, which, to tell the truth, in consequence of its vernacularity, I found to be the most convanient. Och, och, many a larned scrimmage I have signalised myself in during my time. Sure, my name's as common as a mail-coach in Thrinity College; and 'tis well known there isn't a Fellow in it but I could sack, except, maybe, the Prowost. That's their own opinion. 'Corcoran,' says the Prowost, 'is the most larned man in Ireland; an' I'm not ashamed,' says he, 'to acknowledge that I'd rather decline meeting him upon deep points.' Ginteels, all your healths—hem! But among ourselves, I could bog him in a very short time; though I'd scorn to deprive the gintleman of his reputation or his place, even if he sent me a challenge of larnin' to-morrow—although he's too 'cute to venture on doing that—hem, hem!"

To hear an obscure creature, whose name was but faintly known in the remote parts even of the parish in which he lived, draw the long bow at such a rate was highly amusing. The credulous character of his auditory, however, was no

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slight temptation to him; for he knew that next to the legends of the saints, or the Gospel itself, his fictions ranked in authenticity; and he was determined that it should not be his fault if their opinion of his learning and talents was not raised to the highest point.

The feeling experienced by the poor scholar when he awoke the next morning was one both of satisfaction and sorrow. He thought once more of his home and kindred, and reflected that it might be possible he had seen the last of his beloved relations. His grief, however, was checked when he remembered the warm and paternal affection with which he was received on the preceding night by his hospitable countryman. He offered up his prayers to God; humbly besought His grace and protection; nor did he forget to implore a blessing upon those who had thus soothed his early sorrows, and afforded him, though a stranger and friendless, shelter, comfort, and sympathy.

"I hope," thought he, "that I will meet many such, till I overcome my difficulties, an' find myself able to assist my poor father and mother!"

And he did meet many such among the humble, and despised, and neglected of his countrymen; for—and we say it with pride—the character of this excellent farmer is thoroughly that of our peasantry within the range of domestic life.

When he had eaten a comfortable breakfast, and seen his satchel stuffed with provision for his journey, the farmer brought him up to his own room, in which were also his wife and children.

"God," said he, "has been good to me, blessed be His holy name!—betther, it appears, in one sinse, than He has been to you, dear—though, maybe, I don't desarve it as well. But no matther, *acushla;* I have it, an' you want it; so here's a thrifle to help you forrid in your larnin'; an' all I ax from you is to offer up a bit of prayer for me of an odd time, an' if ever you live to be a priest, to say, if it wouldn't be throublesome, one mass for me an' those that you see about me. It's not much, Jemmy *agra*—only two guineas. They may stand your friend whin friends will be scarce wid you; though I hope that won't be the case aither."

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The tears were already streaming down Jemmy's cheeks. "Oh," said the artless boy, "God for ever reward you! but sure I have a great dale of money in the—in the—cuff o' my coat. Indeed, I have, an' I won't want it!"

The farmer, affected by the utter simplicity of the lad, looked at his wife and smiled, although a tear stood in his eye at the time. She wiped her eyes with her apron, and backed the kind offer of her husband.

"Take it, *asthore*," she added. "In your cuff! *Musha*, God help you! sure, it's not much you or the likes of you can have in your cuff, *avourneen!* Don't be ashamed, but take it; we can well afford it, glory be to God for it! It's not, *agra*, bekase you're goin' the way you are—though that same's an honour to you—but bekase our hearts warmed to you, that we offered it, an' bekase we would wish you to be thinkin' of us now an' thin when you're in a strange part of the country. Let me open your pocket an' put them into it. That's a good boy, thank you, an' God bless an' prosper you! I'm sure you wor always biddable."

"Now, childher," said the farmer, addressing his sons and daughters, "never see the sthranger widout a frind, nor wantin' a bed or a dinner, when you grow up to be men an' women. There's many a turn in this world; we may be sthrangers ourselves; an' think of what I would feel if any of you was far from me, widout money or friends, when I'd hear that you met a father in a strange counthry, that lightened your hearts by his kindness. Now, dear, the carts 'ill be ready in no time—eh? Why, there they are at the gate waitin' for you. Get into one of them, an' they'll lave you in the next town. Come, man, bud-an-age, be stout-hearted, an' don't cry—sure, we did nothin' for you to spake of."

He shook the poor scholar by the hand, and drawing his hat over his eyes, passed hurriedly out of the room. Alley stooped down, kissed his lips, and wept; and the children each embraced him with that mingled feeling of compassion and respect which is uniformly entertained for the poor scholar in Ireland.

The boy felt as if he had been again separated from his parents; with a sobbing bosom and wet cheeks he bid

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them farewell, and mounting one of the carts, was soon beyond sight and hearing of the kind-hearted farmer and his family.

When the cart had proceeded about a mile, it stopped, and one of the men who accompanied it, addressing a boy who passed with two sods of turf under his arm, desired him to hurry on and inform his master that they waited for him.

"Tell Misther Corcoran to come into coort," said the man, laughing; "my lordship's waitin' to hear his defince for intindin' not to run away wid Miss Judy Malowny. Tell him Lord Carty's ready to pass sintince on him for not stalin' the heart of her wid his Rule o' Three. Ha! by the holy farmer, you'll get it for stayin' from school to this hour. Be quick, *abouchal!*"

In a few minutes the trembling urchin, glad of any message that might serve to divert the dreaded birch from himself, entered the uproarious "Siminary," caught his forelock, bobbed down his head to the master, and pitched his two sods into a little heap of turf which lay in the corner of the school.

"*Arrah,* Pat Roach, is this an hour to inter into my establishment wid impunity?—eh, you Rosicrucian?"

"Masther, sir," replied the adroit monkey, "I've a message for you, sir, i' you plase."

"An' what might the message be, Masther Pat Roach? To dine to-day wid your worthy father, *abouchal?*"

"No, sir; it's from one o' Mr. Lanigan's boys—him that belongs to the carts, sir; he wants to spake to you, sir, i' you plase."

"An' do you give that by way of an apologetical oration for your absence from the advantages of my tuition until this hour? However, *non constat, Patrici;* I'll pluck the crow wid you on my return. If you don't find yourself a well-flogged youth for your 'mitchin,' never say that this right hand can administer condign punishment to that part of your physical theory which constitutes the antithesis to your *vacuum caput. En et ecce,* you villain," he added, pointing to the birch, "it's newly cut and trimmed, and pregnant wid alacrity for the operation. I correct, Patricius, on fundamental principles, which you'll soon feel to your cost."

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"Masther, sir," replied the lad, in a friendly, conciliating tone, "my fadher ud be oblaged to you if you'd take share of a fat goose wid him to-morrow."

"Go to your sate, Paddy, *avourneen;* divil a dacent boy in the siminary I joke so much wid as I do wid yourself—an' all out of respect for your worthy parents. Faith, I've a great regard for them, all out, an' tell them so."

He then proceeded to the carts, and approaching Jemmy, gave him such advice touching his conduct in Munster as he considered to be most serviceable to an inexperienced lad of his years.

"Here," said the kind-hearted soul—"here, James, is my mite; it's but bare ten shillings; but if I could make it a pound for you, it would give me a degree of delectability which I have not enjoyed for a long time. The truth is, there's something like the *nodus matrimonii*, or what they facetiously term the priest's gallows, dangling over my head, so that any little thrifle I may get must be kept together for that crisis, James, *abouchal;* so that must be my apology for not giving you more, joined to the naked fact that I never was remarkable for a superfluity of cash under any circumstances. Remember what I told you last night. Don't let a shilling of your money into the hands of the masther you settle wid. Give it to the parish priest, and dhraw it from him when you want it. Don't join the parties or the factions of the school. Above all, spake ill of nobody; and if the masther is harsh upon you, either bear it patiently, or mintion it to the priest, or to some other person of respectability in the parish, and you'll be protected. You'll be apt to meet cruelty enough, my good boy; for there are larned Neros in Munster, who'd flog if the province was in flames.

"Now, James, I'll tell you what you'll do when you reach the larned south. Plant yourself on the highest hill in the neighbourhood wherein the academician with whom you intend to stop lives. Let the hour of reconnoitring be that in which dinner is preparing. When seated there, James, take a survey of the smoke that ascends from the chimneys of the farmers' houses, and be sure to direct your steps to that from which the highest and merriest column issues. This is the old plan, and it is a sure one. The highest smoke

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rises from the largest fire, the largest fire boils the biggest pot, the biggest pot generally holds the fattest bacon, and the fattest bacon is kept by the richest farmer. It's a wholesome and comfortable climax, my boy, and one by which I myself was enabled to keep a dacent portion of educated flesh between the master's birch and my ribs. The science itself is called Gastric Geography, and is peculiar only to itinerant young gintlemen who seek for knowledge in the classical province of Munster.

"Here's a book that thravelled along wid myself through all peregrinations—Creech's Translation of Horace. Keep it for my sake; and when you accomplish your education, if you return home this way, I'd thank you to give me a call. Farewell! God bless you and prosper you as I wish, and as I am sure you desarve."

He shook the lad by the hand; and as it was probable that his own former struggles with poverty when in the pursuit of education came with all the power of awakened recollection to his mind, he hastily drew his hand across his eyes, and returned to resume the brief but harmless authority of the *ferula*.

After arriving at the next town, Jemmy found himself once more prosecuting his journey alone. In proportion as he advanced into a strange land, his spirits became depressed, and his heart cleaved more and more to those whom he had left behind him. There is, however, an enthusiasm in the visions of youth, in the speculations of a young heart, which frequently overcomes difficulties that a mind taught by the experience of life would often shrink from encountering. We may all remember the utter recklessness of danger with which in our youthful days we crossed floods, or stood upon the brow of yawning precipices—feats which in after years the wealth of kingdoms could not induce us to perform. Experience, as well as conscience, makes cowards of us all.

The poor scholar in the course of his journey had the satisfaction of finding himself an object of kind and hospitable attention to his countrymen. His satchel of books was literally a passport to their hearts. For instance, as he wended his solitary way, depressed and travel-worn, he was frequently accosted by labourers from behind a ditch on the

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roadside, and after giving a brief history of the object he had in view, brought, if it was dinner-hour, to some farm-house or cabin, where he was made to partake of their meal. Even those poor creatures who gain a scanty subsistence by keeping what are called "dhry lodgins," like *lucus a non lucendo*, because they never keep out the rain, and have mostly a bottle of whisky for those who know how to call for it—even they, in most instances, not only refused to charge the poor scholar for his bed, but declined receiving any remuneration for his subsistence.

"Och, och, no, you poor young crathur, not from you. No, no; if we wouldn't help the likes o' you, who ought we to help? No, dear; but instead o' the *airighad*, jist lave us your blessin', an' maybe we'll thrive as well wid that as we would wid your little pences, that you'll be wantin' for yourself whin your frinds won't be near to help you."

Many, in fact, were the little marks of kindness and attention which the poor lad received on his way. Sometimes a ragged peasant, if he happened to be his fellow-traveller, would carry his satchel so long as they travelled together; or a carman would give him a lift on his empty car; or some humorous postilion, or tipsy "shay-boy," with a comical leer in his eye, would shove him into his vehicle, remarking—

"Bedad, let nobody say you're a poor scholar now, an' you goin' to school in a coach! Be the piper that played afore Moses, if ever any rascal upbraids you wid it, tell him, says you—'You damned rap,' says you, 'I wint to school in a coach! an' that,' says you, 'was what none o' yer beggarly gineration was ever able to do,' says you; 'an' moreover, be the same token,' says you, 'be the holy farmer, if you bring it up to me, I'll make a third eye in your forehead wid the butt o' this whip,' says you. Whish! darlins! That's the go! There's drivin', Barney!—eh?"

At length, after much toil and travel, he reached the South, having experienced as he proceeded a series of affectionate attentions, which had, at least, the effect of reconciling him to the measure he had taken, and impressing upon his heart a deeper confidence in the kindness and hospitality of his countrymen.

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Upon the evening of the day on which he terminated his journey, twilight was nearly falling; the town in which he intended to stop for the night was not a quarter of a mile before him, yet he was scarcely able to reach it; his short, yielding steps were evidently those of a young and fatigued traveller; his brow was moist with perspiration; he had just begun, too, to consider in what manner he should introduce himself to the master who taught the school at which he had been advised to stop, when he heard a step behind him, and on looking back he discovered a tall, well-made, ruddy-faced young man, dressed in black, with a book in his hand, walking after him.

"*Unde et quo, viator?*" said the stranger, on coming up with him.

"Oh, sir," replied Jemmy, "I have not Latin yet."

"You are on your way to seek it, however," replied the other. "Have you travelled far?"

"A long way, indeed, sir; I came from the county ——, sir—the upper part of it."

"Have you letters from your parish priest?"

"I have, sir, and one from my father's landlord, Square Benson, if you ever heard of him."

"What's your object in learning Latin?"

"To be a priest, sir, wid the help o' God; an' to rise my poor father an' mother out of their poverty."

His companion, after hearing this reply, bent a glance upon him that indicated the awakening of an interest in the lad much greater than he probably otherwise would have felt.

"It's only of late," continued the boy, "that my father and mother got poor. They were once very well to do in the world; but they were put out o' their farm in ordher that the agint might put a man that had married a get[1] of his own into it. My father intended to lay his case before Colonel B——, the landlord; but he couldn't see him at all, bekase he never comes near the estate. The agint's called Yallow Sam, sir; he's rich through cheatery and dishonesty; puts money out at intherest, then goes to

[1] A term implying illegitimacy.

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law, and breaks the people entirely; for, somehow, he never was known to lose a lawsuit at all, sir. They say it's the divil, sir, that keeps the lawyers on his side; and that when he an' the lawyers do be dhrawin' up their writins, the divil —God betune me an' harm!—does be helpin' them."

"And is Colonel B—— actually—or, rather, was he—your father's landlord?"

"He was, indeed, sir; it's thruth I'm tellin' you."

"Singular enough! Stand beside me here—do you see that large house to the right among the trees?"

"I do, sir; a great big house, entirely; like a castle, sir."

"The same. Well, that house belongs to Colonel B——, and I am very intimate with him. I am Catholic curate of this parish; and I was, before my ordination, private tutor in his family for four years."

"Maybe, sir, you might have intherest to get my father back into his farm?"

"I do not know that, my good lad, for I am told Colonel B—— is rather embarrassed, and, if I mistake not, in the power of the man you call Yellow Sam, who has, I believe, heavy mortgages upon his property. But no matter; if I cannot help your father, I shall be able to serve yourself. Where do you intend to stop for the night?"

"In dhry lodgins, sir; that's where my father and mother bid me stop always. They war very kind to me, sir, in the dhry lodgins."

"Who is there in Ireland who would not be kind to you, my good boy? I trust you do not neglect your religious duties?"

"Wid the help o' God, sir, I strive to attind to them as well as I can; particularly since I left my father and mother. Every night an' mornin', sir, I say five pathers, five aves, an' a creed; an' sometimes, when I'm walkin' the road, I slip up an odd pather, sir, an' ave, that God may grant me good luck."

The priest smiled at his candour and artlessness, and could not help feeling the interest which the boy had already excited in him increase.

"You do right," said he, "and take care that you neglect not the worship of God. Avoid bad company; be not

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quarrelsome at school; study to improve yourself diligently; attend mass regularly, and be punctual in going to confession."

After some further conversation, the priest and he entered the town together.

"This is my house," said the former; "or if not altogether mine, at least that in which I lodge. Let me see you here at two o'clock to-morrow. In the meantime follow me, and I shall place you with a family where you will experience every kindness and attention that can make you comfortable."

He then led him a few doors up the street, till he stopped at a decent-looking "house of entertainment," to the proprietors of which he introduced him.

"Be kind to this strange boy," said the worthy clergyman, "and whatever the charges of his board and lodging may be until we get him settled, I shall be accountable for them."

"God forbid, your reverence, that ever a penny belongin' to a poor boy looking for his larnin' should go into our pockets, if he was wid us twelve months in the year. No —no! he can stay with the *bouchaleens;* let them be thryin' one another in their books. If he is fardher on in the Latin than Andy, he can help Andy; an' if Andy has the foreway of him, why, Andy can help him. Come here, boys, all of yees. Here's a comarade for yees—a dacent boy that's lookin' for his larnin'; the Lord enable him! Now be kind to him, an' whisper," he added, in an undertone, "don't be bringin' a blush to the *gorsoon's* face. Do yees hear? *Ma chorp!* if yees do! Now mind it. Yees know what I can do whin I'm well vexed! Go, now, an' git him somethin' to ate an' dhrink, an' let him sleep wid Barney in the feather-bed."

During the course of the next day the benevolent curate introduced him to the parish priest, who, from the frequent claims urged by poor scholars upon his patronage, felt no particular interest in his case. He wrote a short letter, however, to the master with whom Jemmy intended to become a pupil, stating that "he was an honest boy, the son of legitimate parents, and worthy of consideration."

The curate, who saw further into the boy's character

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than the parish priest, accompanied him on the following day to the school; introduced him to the master in the most favourable manner, and recommended him in general to the hospitable care of all the pupils. This introduction did not serve the boy so much as might have been expected; there was nothing particular in the letter of the parish priest, and the curate was but a curate—no formidable personage in any church where the goodwill of the rector has not been already secured.

Jemmy returned that day to his lodgings; and the next morning, with his Latin grammar under his arm, he went to the school to taste the first bitter fruits of the tree of knowledge.

On entering it, which he did with a beating heart, he found the despot of a hundred subjects sitting behind a desk, with his hat on, a brow superciliously severe, and his nose crimped into a most cutting and vinegar curl. The truth was, the master knew the character of the curate, and felt that, because he had taken Jemmy under his protection, no opportunity remained for him of fleecing the boy, under the pretence of securing his money, and that consequently the arrival of the poor scholar would be no windfall, as he had expected.

When Jemmy entered, he looked first at the master for his welcome; but the master, who verified the proverb that there are none so blind as those who will not see, took no notice whatsoever of him. The boy then looked timidly about the school in quest of a friendly face, and, indeed, few faces except friendly ones were turned upon him.

Several of the scholars rose up simultaneously to speak to him; but the pedagogue angrily inquired why they had left their seats and their business.

"Why, sir," said a young Munsterman, with a fine Milesian face—"begorra, sir, I believe if we don't welcome the poor scholar, I think you won't. This is the boy, sir, that Mr. O'Brien came along wid yistherday, an' spoke so well of."

"I know that, Thady; and Misther O'Brien thinks, because he himself first passed through that overgrown hedge school, wid slates upon the roof of it, called Thrinity College, and matriculated in Maynooth afther, that he has legal authority

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to recommend every young vagrant to the gratuitous benefits of legitimate classicality. An', I suppose, that you are acting the pathrun, too, Thady, and intend to take this young wild-goose under your protection?"

"Why, sir, isn't he a poor scholar? Sure, he mustn't want his bit an' sup, nor his night's lodgin', anyhow. You're to give him his larnin' only, sir."

"I suppose so, Mr. Thaddeus; but this is the penalty of celebrity. If I weren't so celebrated a man for classics as I am, I would have none of this work. I tell you, Thady, if I had fifty sons I wouldn't make one o' them celebrated."

"Wait till you have one first, sir, and you may make him as great a numskull as you plase, masther."

"But in the meantime, Thady, I'll have no dictation from you as to whether I'll have one or fifty, or as to whether he'll be an ass or a Newton. I say that a dearth of larnin' is like a year of famine in Ireland. When the people are hard pushed, they bleed the fattest bullocks, an' live on their blood; an' so it is wid us academicians. It's always he that has the most larned blood in his veins, and the greatest quantity of it, that such hungry leeches fasten on."

"Thrue for you, sir," said the youth, with a smile; "but they say the bullocks always fatten the betther for it. I hope you'll bleed well now, sir."

"Thady, I don't like the curl of your nose; an', moreover, I have always found you prone to sedition. You remember your conduct at the 'barring out.' I tell you it's well that your worthy father is a dacent, wealthy man, or I'd be apt to give you a *memoria technica* on the *substratum*, Thady."

"God be praised for my father's wealth, sir! But I'd never wish to have a good memory in the way you mention."

"Faith, an' I'll be apt to add that to your other qualities, if you don't take care of yourself."

"I want no such addition, masther! If you do, you'll be apt to subtract yourself from this neighbourhood, an' maybe there won't be more than a cypher gone out of it, afther all."

"Thady, you're a wag," exclaimed the crestfallen pedagogue; "take the lad to your own sate, and show him his task. How is your sister's sore throat, Thady?"

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"Why, sir," replied the benevolent young wit, "she's betther than I am. She can swallow more, sir."

"Not of larnin,' Thady; there you've the widest gullet in the parish."

"My father's the richest man in it, masther," replied Thady. "I think, sir, my gullet and his purse are much about the same size—wid you."

"Thady, you're first-rate at a reply, but exceedingly deficient in the retort courteous. Take the lad to your sate, I say, and see how far he is advanced, and what he is fit for. I suppose, as you are so ginerous, you will volunteer to tache him yourself."

"I'll do that wid pleasure, sir; but I'd like to know whether you intind to tache him or not."

"An' I'd like to know, Thady, who's to pay me for it if I do. A purty return Michael Rooney made me for making him such a linguist as he is. 'You're a tyrant,' said he, when he grew up, 'and instead of expecting me to thank you for your instructions, you ought to thank me for not preparing you for the county hospital, as a memento of the cruelty and brutality you made me feel when I had the misfortune to be a poor scholar under you.' And so, because he became curate of the parish, he showed me the outside of it."

"But will you tache this poor young boy, sir?"

"Let me know who's to guarantee his payments?"

"I have money myself, sir, to pay you for two years," replied Jemmy. "They told me, sir, that you were a great scholar, and I refused to stop in other schools by rason of the name you have for Latin an' Greek."

"*Verbum sat*," exclaimed the barefaced knave. "Come here. Now, you see, I persave you have dacency. Here is your task; get that half-page by heart. You have a 'cute look, an' I've no doubt but the stuff's in you. Come to me afther dismiss, till we have a little talk together."

He accordingly pointed out his task, after which he placed him at his side, lest the inexperienced boy might be put on his guard by any of the scholars. In this intention, however, he was frustrated by Thady, who, as he thoroughly detested the knavish tyrant, resolved to caution the poor scholar against his dishonesty. Thady, indeed, most heartily despised

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the mercenary pedagogue, not only for his obsequiousness to the rich, but on account of his severity to the children of the poor. About two o'clock the young wag went out for a few minutes, and immediately returned in great haste to inform the master that Mr. Delany, the parish priest, and two other gentlemen, wished to see him over at the Cross Keys—an inn which was kept at a place called the Nine-Mile House, within a few perches of the school. The parish priest, though an ignorant, insipid old dunce, was the master's patron, and his slightest wish a divine law to him. The little despot, forgetting his prey, instantly repaired to the Cross Keys, and in his absence, Thady, together with the larger boys of the school, made M'Evoy acquainted with the fraud about to be practised on him.

"His intintion," said they, "is to keep you at home to-night, in ordher to get whatever money you have into his own hands, that he may keep it safe for you; but if you give him a penny you may bid farewell to it. Put it in the curate's hands," added Thady, "or in my father's, an' thin it'll be safe. At all evints, don't stay wid him this night. He'll take your money, and then turn you off in three or four weeks."

"I didn't intind to give him my money," replied Jemmy; "a schoolmaster I met on my way here bid me not to do it. I'll give it to the priest."

"Give it to the curate," said Thady—"wid him it'll be safe; for the parish priest doesn't like to throuble himself wid anything of the kind."

This was agreed upon; the boy was prepared against the designs of the master, and a plan laid down for his future conduct. In the meantime, the latter re-entered the school in a glow of indignation and disappointment.

Thady, however, disregarded him; and as the master knew that the influence of the boy's father could at any time remove him from the parish, his anger subsided without any very violent consequences. The parish priest was his avowed patron, it is true; but if the parish priest knew that Mr. O'Rorke was dissatisfied with him, that moment he would join Mr. O'Rorke in expelling him from the neighbourhood. Mr. O'Rorke was a wealthy and hospitable man, but the schoolmaster was neither the one nor the other.

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During school-hours that day many a warm-hearted urchin entered into conversation with the poor scholar: some moved by curiosity to hear his brief and simple history; others anxious to offer him a temporary asylum in their fathers' houses; and several to know if he had the requisite books, assuring him that, if he had not, they would lend them to him. These proofs of artless generosity touched the homeless youth's heart the more acutely inasmuch as he could perceive but too clearly that the eye of the master rested upon him from time to time with no auspicious glance.

When the scholars were dismissed, a scene occurred which was calculated to produce a smile, although it certainly placed the poor scholar in a predicament by no means agreeable. It resulted from a contest among the boys as to who should first bring him home. The master, who, by that cunning for which the knavish are remarkable, had discovered in the course of the day that his design upon the boy's money was understood, did not ask him to his house. The contest was therefore among the scholars, who, when the master had disappeared from the schoolroom, formed themselves into a circle, of which Jemmy was the centre, each pressing his claim to secure him.

"The right's wid me," exclaimed Thady. "I stood to him all day, an' I say I'll have him for this night. Come wid me, Jemmy. Didn't I do most for you to-day?"

"I'll never forget your kindness," replied poor Jemmy, quite alarmed at the boisterous symptoms of pugilism which already began to appear. In fact, many a tiny fist was shut, as a suitable accompaniment to the arguments with which they enforced their assumed rights.

"There now," continued Thady, "that puts an ind to it; he says he'll never forget my kindness. That's enough; come wid me, Jemmy."

"Is it enough?" said a lad, who, if his father was less wealthy than Thady's, was resolved to put strength of arm against strength of purse. "Maybe it isn't enough! I say I bar it, if your fadher was fifty times as rich! Rich! *Arrah*, don't be comin' over us in regard of your riches, man alive! I'll bring the sthrange boy home this very night, an' it isn't your father's dirty money that'll prevint me!"

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"I'd advise you to get a double ditch about your nose," replied Thady, "before you begin to say anything disrespectful aginst my father. Don't think to ballyrag over me. I'll bring the boy, for I have the best right to him. Didn't I do the masther on his account?"

"A double ditch about my nose?"

"Ay!"

"Are you able to fight me?"

"I'm able to thry it, anyhow, an' willin' too."

"Do you say you're able to fight me?"

"I'll bring the boy home whether or not."

"Thady's not your match, Jack Ratigan," said another boy. "Why don't you challenge your match?"

"If you say a word, I'll half-sole your eye. Let him say whether he's able to fight me like a man or not. That's the chat."

"Half-sole my eye! Thin here I am, an' why don't you do it. You're crowin' over a boy that you're bigger than. I'll fight you for Thady. Now half-sole my eye if you dar! Eh? Here's my eye now! *Arrah*, be the holy man, I'd—— Don't we know the white hen's in you. Didn't Barny Murtagh cow you at the black pool, on Thursday last, whin we wor bathin'."

"Come, Ratigan," said Thady, "peel an' turn out. I say I am able to fight you; an' I'll make you ate your words aginst my father, by way of givin' you your dinner. An' I'll make the dacent strange boy walk home wid me over your body—that is, if he'd not be afraid to dirty his feet."

Ratigan and Thady immediately set to, and in a few minutes there were scarcely a little pair of fists present that were not at work, either on behalf of the two combatants, or with a view to determine their own private rights in being the first to exercise hospitality towards the amazed poor scholar. The fact was that while the two largest boys were arguing the point, about thirty or forty minor disputes all ran parallel to theirs, and their mode of decision was immediately adopted by the pugnacious urchins of the school. In this manner they were engaged, poor Jemmy attempting to tranquillise and separate them, when the master, armed in all his terrors, presented himself.

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With the tact of a sly old disciplinarian, he first secured the door, and instantly commenced the agreeable task of promiscuous castigation. Heavy and vindictive did his arm descend upon those whom he suspected to have cautioned the boy against his rapacity; nor amongst the warm-hearted lads whom he thwacked so cunningly was Thady passed over with a tender hand. Springs, bouncings, doublings, blowing of fingers, scratching of heads, and rubbing of elbows—shouts of pain and doleful exclamations, accompanied by action that displayed surpassing agility—marked the effect with which he plied the instrument of punishment. In the meantime, the spirit of reaction, to use a modern phrase, began to set in. The master, while thus engaged in dispensing justice, first received a rather vigorous thwack on the ear from behind by an anonymous contributor, who gifted him with what is called a musical ear, for it sang during five minutes afterwards. The monarch, when turning round to ascertain the traitor, received another insult on the most indefensible side, and that with a cordiality of manner that induced him to send his right hand reconnoitring the invaded part. He wheeled round a second time with more alacrity than before; but nothing less than the head of Janus could have secured him on the occasion. The anonymous contributor sent him a fresh article. This was supported by another kick behind; the turf began to fly; one after another came in contact with his head and shoulders so rapidly that he found himself, instead of being the assailant, actually placed upon his defence. The insurrection spread; the turf flew more thickly; his subjects closed in upon him in a more compact body; every little fist itched to be at him; the larger boys boldly laid in the facers, punched him in the stomach, treated him most opprobriously behind, every kick and cuff accompanied by a memento of his cruelty; in short, they compelled him, like Charles the Tenth, ignominiously to fly from his dominions.

On finding the throne vacant, some of them suggested that it ought to be overturned altogether. Thady, however, who was the ringleader of the rebellion, persuaded them to be satisfied with what they had accomplished, and consequently succeeded in preventing them from destroying the fixtures.

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Again they surrounded the poor scholar, who, feeling himself the cause of the insurrection, appeared an object of much pity. Such was his grief that he could scarcely reply to them. Their consolation on witnessing his distress was overwhelming; they desired him to think nothing of it; if the master, they told him, should wreak his resentment on him, "be the holy farmer, they would pay the masther." Thady's claim was now undisputed; with only the injury of a black eye, and a lip swelled to the size of a sausage, he walked home in triumph, the poor scholar accompanying him.

The master, who feared that this open contempt of his authority, running up, as it did, into a very unpleasant species of retaliation, was something like a signal for him to leave the parish, felt rather more of the penitent the next morning than did any of his pupils. He was by no means displeased, therefore, to see them drop in about the usual hour. They came, however, not one by one, but in compact groups, each officered by two or three of the larger boys; for they feared that had they entered singly he might have punished them singly, until his vengeance should be satisfied. It was by bitter and obstinate struggles that they succeeded in repressing their mirth, when he appeared at his desk with one of his eyes literally closed, and his nose considerably improved in size and richness of colour. When they were all assembled, he hemmed several times, and in a woe-begone tone of voice, split—by a feeble attempt at maintaining authority, and suppressing his terrors—into two parts that jarred most ludicrously, he briefly addressed them as follows:—

"Gintlemen classics—I have been now twenty-six years engaged in the propagation of Latin and Greek litherature, in conjunction wid Mathematics, but never until yesterday has my influence been spurned; never until yesterday have sacrilegious hands been laid upon my person; never until yesterday have I been kicked—insidiously, ungallantly, and treacherously kicked—by my own subjects. No, gintlemen—and whether I ought to bestow that respectable epithet upon you after yesterday's proceedings is a matter which admits of dispute—never before has the lid of my eye been laid drooping, and that in such a manner that I must be

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blind to the conduct of half my pupils, whether I will or not. You have complained, it appears, of my want of impartiality; but God knows you have compelled me to be partial for a week to come. Neither blame me if I may appear to look upon you with scorn for the next fortnight; for I am compelled to turn up my nose at you much against my own inclination. You need never want an illustration of the *naso adunco* of Horace again—I'm a living example of it. That, and the doctrine of projectile forces, have been exemplified in a manner that will prevent me from ever relishing these subjects in future. No king can consider himself properly such until after he has received the oil of consecration; but you, it appears, think differently. You have unkinged me first, and anointed me afterwards; but, I say, no potentate would relish such unction. It smells confoundedly of republicanism. Maybe this is what you understand by the Republic of Letters; but if it be, I would advise you to change your principles. You treated my ribs as if they were the ribs of a common man; my shins you took liberties wid even to excoriation; my head you made a target of for your hardest turf; and my nose you dishonoured to my face. Was this ginerous? was it discreet? was it subordinate? and, above all, was it classical? However, I will show you what greatness of mind is; I will convince you that it is more noble and god-like to forgive an injury, or rather five dozen injuries, than to avenge one, when—hem—yes, I say, when I—I—might so easily avenge it. I now present you wid an amnesty; return to your allegiance; but never, while in this siminary, under my tuition, attimpt to take the execution of the laws into your own hands. Homerians, come up!"

This address, into which he purposely threw a dash of banter and mock gravity, delivered with the accompaniments of his swelled nose and drooping eye, pacified his audience more readily than a serious one would have done. It was received without any reply or symptom of disrespect, unless the occasional squeak of a suppressed laugh, or the visible shaking of many sides with inward convulsions, might be termed such.

In the course of the day, it is true, their powers of main-

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taining gravity were put to a severe test, particularly when, while hearing a class, he began to adjust his drooping eyelid, or coax back his nose into its natural position. On these occasions a sudden pause might be noticed in the business of the class; the boy's voice who happened to read at the time would fail him; and on resuming his sentence by command of the master, its tone was tremulous, and scarcely adequate to the task of repeating the words without his bursting into laughter. The master observed all this clearly enough, but his mind was already made up to take no further notice of what had happened.

All this conduced to render the situation of the poor scholar much more easy, or rather less penal, than it would otherwise have been. Still the innocent lad was on all possible occasions a butt for this miscreant. To miss a word was a pretext for giving him a cruel blow. To arrive two or three minutes later than the appointed hour was certain on his part to be attended with immediate punishment. Jemmy bore it all with silent heroism. He shed no tear—he uttered no remonstrance; but under the anguish of pain so barbarously inflicted, he occasionally looked round upon his schoolfellows with an expression of silent entreaty that was seldom lost upon them. Cruel to him the master often was, but to inhuman barbarity the large scholars never permitted him to descend. Whenever any of the wealthier farmers' sons had neglected their lessons or deserved chastisement, the mercenary creature substituted a joke for the birch; but as soon as the son of a poor man, or, which was better still, the poor scholar, came before him, he transferred that punishment which the wickedness or idleness of respectable boys deserved to his or their shoulders. For this outrageous injustice the hard-hearted old villain had some plausible excuse ready, so that it was in many cases difficult for Jemmy's generous companions to interfere in his behalf, or parry the sophistry of such a petty tyrant.

In this miserable way did he pass over the tedious period of a year, going about every night in rotation with the scholars, and severely beaten on all possible occasions by the master. His conduct and manners won him the love and esteem of all except his tyrant instructor. His assiduity was remarkable,

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and his progress in the elements of English and classical literature surprisingly rapid. This added considerably to his character, and procured him additional respect. It was not long until he made himself useful and obliging to all the boys beneath his standing in the school. These services he rendered with an air of such kindness, and a grace so naturally winning, that the attachment of his schoolfellows increased towards him from day to day. Thady was his patron on all occasions; neither did the curate neglect him. The latter was his banker, for the boy had very properly committed his purse to his keeping. At the expiration of every quarter the schoolmaster received the amount of his bill, which he never failed to send in when due.

Jemmy had not, during his first year's residence in the south, forgotten to request the kind curate's interference with the landlord on behalf of his father. To be the instrument of restoring his family to their former comfortable holding under Colonel B—— would have afforded him, without excepting the certainty of his own eventual success, the highest gratification. Of this, however, there was no hope, and nothing remained for him but assiduity in his studies, and patience under the merciless scourge of his teacher. In addition to an engaging person and agreeable manners, nature had gifted him with a high order of intellect, and great powers of acquiring knowledge. The latter he applied to the business before him with indefatigable industry. The school at which he settled was considered the first in Munster; and the master, notwithstanding his known severity, stood high, and justly so, in the opinion of the people, as an excellent classical and mathematical scholar. Jemmy applied himself to the study of both, and at the expiration of his second year had made such progress that he stood without a rival in the school.

It is usual, as we have said, for the poor scholar to go night after night, in rotation, with his schoolfellows. He is particularly welcome in the houses of those farmers whose children are not so far advanced as himself. It is expected that he should instruct them in the evenings, and enable them to prepare their lessons for the following day; a task which he always performs with pleasure, because in teaching them he

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is confirming his own mind in the knowledge which he has previously acquired. Towards the end of the second year, however, he ceased to circulate in this manner. Two or three of the most independent parishioners, whose sons were only commencing their studies, agreed to keep him week about; an arrangement highly convenient to him, as by that means he was not so frequently dragged, as he had been, to the remotest parts of the parish. Being an expert penman, he acted also as secretary of grievances to the poor, who frequently employed him to draw up petitions to obdurate landlords, or to their more obdurate agents, and letters to soldiers in all parts of the world from their anxious and affectionate relations. All these little services he performed kindly and promptly. Many a blessing was fervently invoked upon his head; the "good word" and "the prayer" were all they could afford, as they said, "to the *bouchal dhas oge* that tuck the world an him for sake o' the larnin', and that hasn't the kindliness o' the mother's breath an' the mother's hand near him, the crathur."

About the middle of the third year he was once more thrown upon the general hospitality of the people. The three farmers with whom he had lived for the preceding six months emigrated to America, as did many others of that class which, in this country, most nearly approximates to the substantial yeomanry of England. The little purse, too, which he had placed in the hands of the kind priest was exhausted. A season of famine, sickness, and general distress had set in; and the master, on understanding that he was without money, became diabolically savage. In short, the boy's difficulties increased to a perplexing degree. Even Thady and his grown companions, who usually interposed in his behalf when the master became excessive in correcting him, had left the school, and now the prospect before him was dark and cheerless indeed. For a few months longer, however, he struggled on, meeting every difficulty with meek endurance. Since his very boyhood he had reverenced the sanctions of religion, and was actuated by a strong devotional spirit. He trusted in God, and worshipped Him night and morning with a sincere heart.

At this crisis he was certainly an object of pity; his clothes,

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which for some time before were reduced to tatters, he had replaced by a cast-off coat and small-clothes, a present from his friend the curate, who never abandoned him. This worthy young man could not afford him money; for as he had but fifty pounds a year with which to clothe, subsist himself, keep a horse, and pay rent, it was hardly to be expected that his benevolence could be extensive. In addition to this, famine and contagious disease raged with formidable violence in the parish; so that the claims upon his bounty of hundreds who lay huddled together in cold cabins, in out-houses, and even behind ditches, were incessant as well as heartrending. The number of interments that took place daily in the parish was awful; nothing could be seen but funerals attended by groups of ragged and emaciated creatures, from whose hollow eyes gleamed forth the wolfish fire of famine. The wretched mendicants were countless; and the number of coffins that lay on the public roads—where, attended by the nearest relatives of the deceased, they had been placed for the purpose of procuring charity—were greater than ever had been remembered by the oldest inhabitant.

Such was the state of the parish when our poor scholar complained one day in school of severe illness. The early symptoms of the prevailing epidemic were well known, and, on examining more closely into his situation, it was clear that, according to the phraseology of the people, he had "got the faver on his back"—had caught "a heavy load of the faver." The Irish are particularly apprehensive of contagious maladies. The moment it had been discovered that Jemmy was infected, his schoolfellows avoided him with a feeling of terror scarcely credible, and the inhuman master was delighted at any circumstance, however calamitous, that might afford him a pretext for driving the friendless youth out of the school.

"Take," said he, "everything belongin' to you out of my establishment: you were always a plague to me, but now more than ever. Be quick, sarra, and nidificate for yourself somewhere else. Do you want to thranslate my siminary into an hospital, and myself into Lazarus as president? Go off, you wild-goose, and conjugate *ægroto* wherever you find a convenient spot to do it in."

The poor boy silently and with difficulty arose, collected

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his books, and slinging on his satchel, looked to his schoolfellows, as if he had said, "Which of you will afford me a place where to lay my aching head?" All, however, kept aloof from him; he had caught the contagion, and the contagion, they knew, had swept the people away in vast numbers.

At length he spoke. "Is there any boy among you," he inquired, "who will bring me home? You know I am a stranger, an' far from my own—God help me!"

This was followed by a profound silence. Not one of those who had so often befriended him, or who would on any other occasion share their bed and their last morsel with him, would even touch his person, much less allow him, when thus plague-stricken, to take shelter under their roof. Such are the effects of selfishness when it is opposed only by the force of those natural qualities that are not elevated into a sense of duty by clear and profound views of Christian truth. It is one thing to perform a kind action from constitutional impulse, and another to perform it as a fixed duty, perhaps contrary to that impulse.

Jemmy, on finding himself avoided like a Hebrew leper of old, silently left the school, and walked on without knowing whither he should ultimately direct his steps. He thought of his friend the priest; but the distance between him and his place of abode was greater, he felt, than his illness would permit him to travel. He walked on, therefore, in such a state of misery and dereliction as can scarcely be conceived, much less described. His head ached excessively, an intense pain shot like death-pangs through his lower back and loins, his face was flushed, and his head giddy. In this state he proceeded, without money or friends, without a house to shelter him, a bed on which to lie, far from his own relations, and with the prospect of death, under circumstances peculiarly dreadful, before him! He tottered on, however, the earth, as he imagined, reeling under him; the heavens, he thought, streaming with fire, and the earth indistinct and discoloured. Home, the paradise of the absent—home, the heaven of the affections—with all its tenderness and blessed sympathies, rushed upon his heart. His father's deep but quiet kindness, his mother's sedulous love; his brothers—all that they had

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been to him—these, with their thousand heart-stirring associations, started into life before him again and again. But he was now ill, and the mother—ah! the enduring sense of that mother's love placed her brightest and strongest and tenderest in the far and distant group which his imagination bodied forth.

"Mother!" he exclaimed—"oh, mother, why—why did I ever lave you? Mother! the son you loved is dyin' without a kind word—lonely and neglected in a strange land! Oh, my own mother! why did I ever lave you?"

The conflict between his illness and his affections overcame him: he staggered—he grasped as if for assistance at the vacant air—he fell, and lay for some time in a state of insensibility.

The season was then that of midsummer, and early meadows were falling before the scythe. As the boy sank to the earth, a few labourers were eating their scanty dinner of bread and milk so near him that only a dry low ditch ran between him and them. They had heard his words indistinctly, and one of them was putting the milk-bottle to his lips, when, attracted by the voice, he looked in the direction of the speaker, and saw him fall. They immediately recognised "the poor scholar," and in a moment were attempting to recover him.

"Why, thin, my poor fellow, what's *a shaughran* wid you?"

Jemmy started for a moment, looked about him, and asked, "Where am I?"

"Faith, thin, you're in Rory Connor's field, widin a few perches of the highroad. But what ails you, poor boy?—is it sick you are?"

"It is," he replied; "I have got the faver. I had to lave school; none o' them would take me home, an' I doubt I must die in a Christian counthry undher the open canopy of heaven. Oh, for God's sake, don't lave me! Bring me to some hospital, or into the next town, where people may know that I'm sick, an' maybe some kind Christian will relieve me!"

The moment he mentioned "fever" the men involuntarily drew back, after having laid him reclining against the green ditch.

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"Thin, thundher an' turf, what's to be done?" exclaimed one of them, thrusting his spread fingers into his hair. "Is the poor boy to die widout help among Christyeens like uz?"

"But hasn't he the sickness?" exclaimed another; "an' in that case, Pether, what's to be done?"

"Why, you *gommoch*, isn't that what I'm wantin' to know? You wor ever an' always a dam' ass, Paddy, except before you wor born, an' thin you wor like Major M'Curragh, worse nor nothin'. Why the sarra do you be spakin' about the sickness, the Lord protect us, whin you know I'm so timersome of it?"

"But considher," said another, edging off from Jemmy, however, "that he's a poor scholar, an' that there's a great blessin' to thim that assists the likes of him."

"Ay, is there that, sure enough, Dan; but you see—blur-an-age, what's to be done? He can't die this a-way, wid nobody wid him but himself."

"Let us help him!" exclaimed another—"for *God's* sake, an' we won't be apt to take it thin."

"Ay, but how can we help him, Frank? Oh, bedad, it ud be a murdherin' shame, all out, to let the crathur die by himself, widout company, so it would."

"No one will take him in for fraid o' the sickness. Why, I'll tell you what we'll do. Let us skhame the remainder o' this day off o' the Major, an' build a shed for him on the roadside here, jist against the ditch. It's as dhry as powdher. Thin we can go through the neighbours, an' get thim to sit near him time about, an' to bring him little *dhreeniens* o' nourishment."

"Divil a purtier! Come, thin, let us get a lot o' the neighbours, and set about it, poor *bouchal*. Who knows but it may bring down a blessin' upon us, aither in this world or the next."

"Amin! I pray Gorra! an' so it will, sure! doesn't the Catechiz say it? 'There is but one Church,' says the Catechiz, 'one Faith, an' one Baptism.' Bedad, there's a power o' fine larnin' in the same Catechiz, so there is, an' mighty improvin'."

An Irishman never works for wages with half the zeal

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which he displays when working *con amore*. Ere many hours had passed, a number of the neighbours had assembled, and Jemmy found himself on a bunch of clean straw in a little shed erected for him at the edge of the road.

Perhaps it would be impossible to conceive a more gloomy state of misery than that in which young M'Evoy found himself. Stretched on the side of the public road, in a shed formed of a few loose sticks covered over with "scraws"—that is, the sward of the earth pared into thin stripes—removed about fifty perches from any human habitation—his body racked with a furious and oppressive fever—his mind conscious of all the horrors by which he was surrounded—without the comforts even of a bed or bedclothes—and, what was worst of all, those from whom he might expect kindness afraid to approach him! Lying helpless, under these circumstances, it ought not to be wondered at if he wished that death might at once close his extraordinary sufferings, and terminate those struggles which filial piety had prompted him to encounter.

This certainly is a dark picture, but our humble hero knew that even there the power and goodness of God could support him. The boy trusted in God; and when removed into his little shed, and stretched upon his clean straw, he felt that his situation was, in good sooth, comfortable, when contrasted with what it might have been if left to perish behind a ditch, exposed to the scorching heat of the sun by day, and the dews of heaven by night. He felt the hand of God even in this, and placed himself, with a short but fervent prayer, under His fatherly protection.

Irishmen, however, are not just that description of persons who can pursue their usual avocations and see a fellow-creature die without such attentions as they can afford him; not precisely so bad as that, gentle reader! Jemmy had not been two hours on his straw when a second shed, much larger than his own, was raised within a dozen yards of it. In this a fire was lit; a small pot was then procured, milk was sent in, and such other little comforts brought together as they supposed necessary for the sick boy. Having accomplished these matters, a kind of guard was set to watch and nurse-tend him; a pitchfork was got, on the prongs of which

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they intended to reach him bread across the ditch; and a long-shafted shovel was borrowed, on which to furnish him drink with safety to themselves. That inextinguishable vein of humour which in Ireland mingles even with death and calamity, was also visible here. The ragged, half-starved creatures laughed heartily at the oddity of their own inventions, and enjoyed the ingenuity with which they made shift to meet the exigencies of the occasion, without in the slightest degree having their sympathy and concern for the afflicted youth lessened.

When their arrangements were completed, one of them (he of the scythe) made a little whey, which, in lieu of a spoon, he stirred with the end of his tobacco-knife; he then extended it across the ditch upon the shovel, after having put it in a tin porringer.

"Do you want a taste o' whey, *avourneen?*"

"Oh, I do," replied Jemmy; "give me a drink, for God's sake."

"There it is, *abouchal,* on the shovel. *Musha,* if myself rightly knows what side you're lyin' an, or I'd put it as near your lips as I could. Come, man, be stout, don't be cast down, at all, at all; sure, bud-an-age, we're shovellin' the whey to you, anyhow."

"I have it," replied the boy—"oh, I have it. May God never forget this to you, whoever you are."

"Faith, if you want to know who I am, I'm Pether Connor the mower, that never seen to-morrow. Begorra, poor boy, you mustn't let your spirits down, at all, at all. Sure, the neighbours is all bint to watch an' take care of you. May I take away the shovel?—an' they've built a brave snug shed here beside yours, where they'll stay wid you time about until you get well. We'll feed you wid whey enough, bekase we've made up our minds to stale lots o' sweet milk for you. Ned Branagan an' I will milk Rody Hartigan's cows to-night, wid the help o' God. Divil a bit sin in it, so there isn't; an' if there is, too, be my sowl, there's no harm in it, anyway—for he's but a nager himself, the same Rody. So, *acushla,* keep a light heart, for, begorra, you're sure o' the thin pair o' trousers, anyhow. Don't think you're desarted—for you're not. It's all in regard o' bein' afeard o' this faver, or it's not

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this way you'd be; but, as I said a while agone, when you want anything, spake, for you'll still find two or three of us beside you here, night an' day. Now won't you promise to keep your mind asy, when you know that we're beside you?"

"God bless you," replied Jemmy, "you've taken a weight off my heart. I thought I'd die wid nobody near me at all."

"Oh, the sorra fear of it. Keep your heart up. We'll stale lots o' milk for you. Bad scran to the baste in the parish but we'll milk, sooner nor you'd want the whey, you crathur, you."

The boy felt relieved, but his malady increased; and were it not that the confidence of being thus watched and attended to supported him, it is more than probable he would have sunk under it.

When the hour of closing the day's labour arrived, Major —— came down to inspect the progress which his mowers had made, and the goodness of the crop upon his meadows. No sooner was he perceived at a distance than the scythes were instantly resumed, and the mowers pursued their employment with an appearance of zeal and honesty that could not be suspected.

On arriving at the meadows, however, he was evidently startled at the miserable day's work they had performed.

"Why, Connor," said he, addressing the nurse-tender, "how is this? I protest you have not performed half a day's labour! This is shameful!"

"Bedad, major, it's thrue for your honour, sure enough. It's a poor day's work, the never a doubt of it. But be all the books that never was opened or shut, busier men nor we were since mornin' couldn't be had for love or money. You see, major, these meadows—bad luck to them!—God pardon me for cursin' the harmless crathurs, for sure, 'tisn't their fau't, sir; but you see, major, I'll insinse you into it. Now look here, your honour. Did you ever see deeper meadow nor that same since you war foal—hem—since you war born, your honour? Maybe your honour, major, ud just take the scythe an' sthrive to cut a swaythe?"

"Nonsense, Connor; don't you know I cannot."

"Thin, begorra, sir, I wisht you could thry it. I'd kiss

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the book, we did more labour an' worked harder this day nor any day for the last fortnight. If it was light grass, sir —See here, major, here's a light bit—now, look at how the scythe runs through it! Thin look at here agin—jist observe this, major—why, murdher alive, don't you see how slow she goes through that where the grass is heavy! Bedad, major, you'll be made up this season wid your hay, anyhow. Divil carry the finer meadow ever I put scythe in nor the same meadow, God bless it!"

"Yes, I see it, Connor. I agree with you as to its goodness. But the reason of that is, Connor, that I always direct my steward myself in laying it down for grass. Yes, you're right, Connor; if the meadow were light, you could certainly mow comparatively a greater space in a day."

"Be the livin' farmer—God pardon me for swearin'—it's a pleasure to have dalins wid a gintleman like you, that knows things as 'cute as if you war a mower yourself, your honour. Bedad, I'll go bail, sir, it wouldn't be hard to tache you that same."

"Why, to tell you the truth, Connor, you have hit me off pretty well. I'm beginning to get a taste for agriculture."

"But," said Connor, scratching his head, "won't your honour allow us the price of a glass, or a pint o' porther, for our hard day's work. Bad cess to me, sir, but this meadow 'ill play the puck wid us afore we get it finished. Atween ourselves, sir—if it wouldn't be takin' freedoms—if you'd look to your own farmin' yourself. The steward, sir, is a dacent kind of man, but, sowl, he couldn't hould a candle to your honour in seein' to the best way of doing a thing, sir. Won't you allow us glasses apiece, your honour? Faix, we're kilt entirely, so we are."

"Here is half-a-crown among you, Connor; but don't get drunk."

"Dhrunk! *Musha*, long may you reign, sir! Be the scythe in my hand, I'd rather—Och, faix, you're one o' the ould sort, sir—the raal Irish gintleman, your honour. An' sure your name's far an' near for that, anyhow."

Connor's face would have done the heart of Brooke or Cruikshank good, had either of them seen it charged with humour so rich as that which beamed from it when the

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major left them to enjoy their own comments upon what had happened.

"Oh, be the livin' farmer," said Connor, "are we alive at all afther doin' the major! Oh, thin, the curse o' the crows upon you, major darlin', but you are a *Manus!*[1] The damn' rip o' the world, that wouldn't give the breath he breathes to the poor for God's sake, an' he'll threwn a man half-a-crown that'll blarney him for farmin', an' him doesn't know the differ atween a Cork-red an' a Yallow-leg!"[2]

"Faith, he's the boy that knows how to make a Judy of himself, anyway," exclaimed another. "The devil a hapurth asier nor to give these quality the bag to hould, so there isn't—an' they think themselves so 'cute, too!"

"Augh!" said a third, "couldn't a man find the soft side o' them as asy as make out the way to his own nose widout bein' led to it. Divil a sin it is to do them, anyway. Sure, he thinks we wor tooth an' nail at the meadow all day; an' me thought I'd never recover it, to see Connor here—the rise he tuck out of him! Ha, ha, ha—och, och—murdher, oh!"

"Faith," exclaimed Connor, "'twas good, you see, to help the poor scholar; only for it we couldn't get shkamin' the half-crown out of him. I think we ought to give the crathur half of it, an' him so sick—he'll be wantin' it worse nor ourselves."

"Oh, begorra, he's fairly entitled to that. I vote him fifteen-pince."

"Surely!" they exclaimed unanimously—"tundher an' turf, wasn't he the manes of gettin' it for us?"

"Jemmy, *abouchal*," said Connor, across the ditch to M'Evoy, "are you sleepin'?"

"Sleepin'! Oh, no," replied Jemmy; "I'd give the wide world for one wink of asy sleep."

"Well, *aroon*, here's fifteen-pince for you, that we shkam—will I tell him how we got it?"

"No, don't," replied his neighbours; "the boy's given to devotion, an' maybe might scruple to take it."

"Here's fifteen-pince, *avourneen*, on the shovel, that we're

[1] A booby easily hoaxed. [2] Different kinds of potatoes.

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giving you for God's sake. If you over [1] this, won't you offer up a prayer for us?—won't you, *avick?*"

"I can never forget your kindness," replied Jemmy. "I will always pray for you, an' may God for ever bless you an' yours."

"Poor crathur! May the heavens above have prosthration on him. Upon my sowl, it's good to have his blessin' an' his prayer. Now don't fret, Jemmy; we're lavin' you wid a lot o' neighbours here. They'll watch you time about, so that whin you want anything, call, *avourneen*, an' there'll still be some one here to answer. God bless you, an' restore you, till we come wid the milk we'll stale for you wid the help o' God. Bad cess to me, but it ud be a mortual sin, so it would, to let the poor boy die at all, an' him so far from home. For, as the Catechiz says, 'There is but one Faith, one Church, and one Baptism!' Well, the readin' that's in that Catechiz is mighty improvin', glory be to God!"

It would be utterly impossible to detail the affliction which our poor scholar suffered in this wretched shed for the space of a fortnight, notwithstanding the efforts of those kind-hearted people to render his situation comfortable.

The little wigwam they had constructed near him was never, even for a moment, during his whole illness without two or three persons ready to attend him. In the evening their numbers increased. A fire was always kept burning, over which a little pot for making whey or gruel was suspended. At night they amused each other with anecdotes and laughter, and occasionally with songs, when certain that their patient was not asleep. Their excursions to steal milk for him were performed with uncommon glee, and related among themselves with great humour. These thefts would have been unnecessary, had not the famine which then prevailed through the province been so excessive. The crowds that swarmed about the houses of wealthy farmers, supplicating a morsel to keep body and soul together, resembled nothing which our English readers ever had an opportunity of seeing. Ragged, emaciated creatures tottered about with an expression of wildness and voracity in their gaunt features; fathers and mothers reeled under the burden

[1] That is, to get over—to survive.

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of their beloved children, the latter either sick, or literally expiring for want of food; and the widow, in many instances, was compelled to lay down her head to die with the wail, the feeble wail, of her withered orphans mingling with her last moans! In such a state of things it was difficult to procure a sufficient quantity of milk to allay the unnatural thirst even of one individual when parched by the scorching heat of a fever. Notwithstanding this, his wants were for the most part anticipated, so far as their means would allow them; his shed was kept waterproof; and either shovel or pitchfork always ready to be extended to him, by way of substitution for the right hand of fellowship.

When he called for anything, the usual observation was, "Husht! the crathur's callin'; I must take the shovel an' see what he wants."

There were times, it is true, when the mirth of the poor fellows was very low, for hunger was generally among themselves. There were times when their own little shed presented a touching and melancholy spectacle—perhaps we ought also to add, a noble one; for to contemplate a number of men, considered rude and semi-barbarous, devoting themselves, in the midst of privations the most cutting and oppressive, to the care and preservation of a strange lad, merely because they knew him to be without friends and protection, is to witness a display of virtue truly magnanimous. The food on which some of the persons were occasionally compelled to live was blood boiled up with a little oatmeal; for when a season of famine occurs in Ireland, the people usually bleed the cows and bullocks to preserve themselves from actual starvation. It is truly a sight of appalling misery to behold feeble women gliding across the country, carrying their cans and pitchers, actually trampling upon fertility and fatness, and collected in the corner of some grazier's farm, waiting, gaunt and ravenous as ghouls, for their portion of blood. During these melancholy periods of want, everything in the shape of an esculent disappears. The miserable creatures will pick up chickenweed, nettles, sorrel, bugloss, *preshagh*, and seaweed, which they will boil, and eat with the voracity of persons writhing under the united agonies of hunger and death! Yet, singular to say, the very country thus groaning

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under such a terrible sweep of famine is actually pouring from all her ports a profusion of food, day after day; flinging it from her fertile bosom with the wanton excess of a prodigal oppressed by abundance.

Despite, however, of all that the poor scholar's nurse-guard suffered, he was attended with a fidelity of care and sympathy which no calamity could shake. Nor was this care fruitless; after the fever had passed through its usual stages, he began to recover. In fact, it has been observed, very truly, that scarcely any person has been known to die under circumstances similar to those of the poor scholar. These sheds, the erection of which is not unfrequent in case of fever, have the advantage of pure free air, by which the patient is cooled and refreshed. But how is it possible to detail what M'Evoy suffered during this fortnight of intense agony? Not those who can command the luxuries of life—not those who can reach its comforts—nor those who can supply themselves with its bare necessaries—neither the cotter who struggles to support his wife and helpless children—the mendicant who begs from door to door—nor even the felon in his cell—can imagine what he felt in the solitary misery of his feverish bed. Hard is the heart that cannot feel his sorrows, when, stretched beside the common way, without a human face to look on, he called upon the mother whose brain, had she known his situation, would have been riven—whose affectionate heart would have been broken by the knowledge of his affliction. It was a situation which afterwards appeared to him dark and terrible. The pencil of the painter could not depict it, nor the pen of the poet describe it, except like a dim vision, which neither the heart nor the imagination are able to give to the world as a tale steeped in the sympathies excited by reality.

His whole heart and soul, as he afterwards acknowledged, were, during his trying illness, at home. The voices of his parents, of his sisters, and of his brothers were always in his ears; their countenances surrounded his cold and lonely shed; their hands touched him; their eyes looked upon him in sorrow, and their tears bedewed him. Even there, the light of his mother's love, though she herself was distant, shone upon his sorrowful couch; and he has declared that in

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no past moment of affection did his soul ever burn with a sense of its presence so strongly as it did in the heart-dreams of his severest illness. But God is love, "and tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb."

Much of all his sufferings would have been alleviated, were it not that his two best friends in the parish, Thady and the curate, had been both prostrated by the fever at the same time with himself. There was consequently no person of respectability in the neighbourhood cognisant of his situation. He was left to the humbler class of the peasantry, and honourably did they, with all their errors and ignorances, discharge those duties which greater wealth and greater knowledge would probably have left unperformed.

On the morning of the last day he ever intended to spend in the shed, at eleven o'clock, he heard the sounds of horses' feet passing along the road. The circumstance was one quite familiar to him; but these horsemen, whoever they might be, stopped, and immediately after, two respectable-looking men, dressed in black, approached him. His forlorn state and frightfully-wasted appearance startled them, and the younger of the two asked, in a tone of voice which went directly to his heart, how it was they found him in a situation so desolate.

The kind interest implied by the words, and probably a sense of his utterly destitute state, affected him strongly, and he burst into tears. The strangers looked at each other, then at him; and if looks could express sympathy, theirs expressed it.

"My good boy," said the first, "how is it that we find you in a situation so deplorable and wretched as this? Who are you, or why is it that you have not a friendly roof to shelter you?"

"I'm a poor scholar," replied Jemmy, "the son of honest but reduced parents; I came to this part of the country with the intention of preparing myself for Maynooth, and if it might plase God, with the hope of being able to raise them out of their distress."

The strangers looked more earnestly at the boy. Sickness had touched his fine intellectual features into a purity of expression almost ethereal. His fair skin appeared

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nearly transparent; and the light of truth and candour lit up his countenance with a lustre which affliction could not dim.

The other stranger approached him more nearly, stooped for a moment, and felt his pulse.

"How long have you been in this country?" he inquired.

"Nearly three years."

"You have been ill of the fever which is so prevalent; but how did you come to be left to the chance of perishing upon the highway?"

"Why, sir, the people were afeard to let me into their houses in consequence of the faver. I got ill in school, sir, but no boy would venture to bring me home, an' the master turned me out, to die, I believe. May God forgive him!"

"Who was your master, my child?"

"The great Mr. ——, sir. If Mr. O'Brien, the curate of the parish, hadn't been ill himself at the same time, or if Mr. O'Rorke's son, Thady, hadn't been laid on his back, too, sir, I wouldn't suffer what I did."

"Has the curate been kind to you?"

"Sir, only for him and the big boys I couldn't stay in the school, on account of the master's cruelty, particularly since my money was out."

"You are better now, are you not?" said the other gentleman.

"Thank God, sir!—oh, thanks be to the Almighty, I am! I expect to be able to lave this place to-day or to-morrow."

"And where do you intend to go when you recover?"

The boy himself had not thought of this, and the question came on him so unexpectedly that he could only reply:

"Indeed, sir, I don't know."

"Had you," inquired the second stranger, "testimonials from your parish priest?"

"I had, sir; they are in the hands of Mr. O'Brien. I also had a character from my father's landlord."

"But how," asked the other, "have you existed here during your illness? Have you been long sick?"

"Indeed, I can't tell you, sir, for I don't know how the

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time passed at all; but I know, sir, that there were always two or three people attendin' me. They sent me whatever they thought I wanted, upon a shovel or a pitchfork, across the ditch, because they were afraid to come near me."

During the early part of the dialogue, two or three old hats, or *caubeens*, might have been seen moving steadily over from the wigwam to the ditch which ran beside the shed occupied by M'Evoy. Here they remained stationary, for those who wore them were now within hearing of the conversation, and ready to give their convalescent patient a good word, should it be necessary.

"How were you supplied with drink and medicine?" asked the younger stranger.

"As I've just told you, sir," replied Jemmy, "the neighbours here let me want for nothing that they had. They kept me in more whey than I could use; and they got me medicine, too, some way or other. But indeed, sir, during a great part of the time I was ill I can't say how they attended me; I wasn't sensible, sir, of what was goin' on about me."

One of those who lay behind the ditch now arose, and after a few hems and scratchings of the head, ventured to join in the conversation.

"Pray have you, my man," said the elder of the two, "been acquainted with the circumstances of this boy's illness?"

"Is it the poor scholar, my lord?[1] Oh, thin, bedad, it's myself that has that. The poor crathur was in a terrible way all out, so he was. He caught the faver in the school beyant one day, an' was turned out by the nager o' the world that he was larnin' from."

"Are you one of the persons who attended him?"

"Och, och, the crathur! what could unsignified people like us do for him, barrin' a thrifle? Anyhow, my lord, it's the meracle o' the world that he was ever able to over it at all. Why, sir, good luck to the one of him but suffered as much, wid the help o' God, as ud overcome fifty men!"

"How did you provide him with drink at such a distance from any human habitation?"

[1] The peasantry always address a Roman Catholic bishop as "my lord."

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"Throth, hard enough we found it, sir, to do that same; but sure, whether or not, my lord, we couldn't be sich nagers as to let him die all out, for want o' somethin' to moisten his throath wid."

"I hope," inquired the other, "you had nothing to do in the milk-stealing which has produced such an outcry in this immediate neighbourhood?"

"Milk-stalin'! Oh, bedad, sir, there never was the likes known afore in the counthry. The Lord forgive them that did it! Begorra, sir, the wickedness o' the people's mighty improvin', if one ud take warnin' by it, glory be to God!"

"Many of the farmers' cows have been milked at night—perfectly drained—even my own cows have not escaped; and we who have suffered are certainly determined, if possible, to ascertain those who have committed the theft. I, for my part, have gone even beyond my ability in relieving the wants of the poor during this period of sickness and famine; I therefore deserved this the less."

"By the powdhers, your honour, if any gintleman desarved to have his cows unmilked, it's yourself. But, as I said this minute, there's no end to the wickedness o' the people, so there's not, although the Catechiz is against them—for, says it, 'There is but one Faith, one Church, an' one Baptism.' Now, sir, isn't it quare that people, wid sich words in the book afore them, won't be guided by it? I suppose they thought it only a *white* sin, sir, to take the milk, the thieves o' the world."

"Maybe, your honour," said another, "that it was only to keep the life in some poor sick crathur that wanted it more nor you nor the farmers, that they did it. There's some o' the same farmers desarve worse, for they're keepin' up the prices o' their male an' praties upon the poor, an' did so all along, that they might make money by our outher distitution."

"That is no justification for theft," observed the graver of the two. "Does any one among you suspect those who committed it in this instance? If you do, I command you, as your bishop, to mention them."

"How, for instance," added the other, "were you able to supply this sick boy with whey during his illness?"

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"Oh, thin, gintlemen," replied Connor, dexterously parrying the question, "but it's a mighty improvin' thing to see our own bishop—God spare his lordship to us!—an' the Protestant minister o' the parish joinin' together to relieve an' give good advice to the poor! Bedad, it's settin' a fine example, so it is, to the quality, if they'd take patthern by it."

"Reply," said the bishop, rather sternly, "to the questions we have asked you."

"The quistions, your lordship? It's proud an' happy we'd be to do what you want; but the sarra man among us can do it, barrin' we'd say what we ought not to say. That's the truth, my lord; an' surely 'tisn't your gracious reverence that ud want us to go beyant it?"

"Certainly not," replied the bishop. "I warn you against falsehood, a charge which might frequently be brought against you in your intercourse with the gentry of the country, whom you seldom scruple to deceive, by gliding into a character, when speaking to them, that is often the reverse of your real one; whilst, at the same time, you are both honest and sincere to persons of your class. Put away this practice, for it is both sinful and discreditable."

"God bless your lordship! an' many thanks to your gracious reverence for advisin' us! Well we know that it's the blessed thing to folly your words."

"Bring over that naked, starved-looking man who is stirring the fire under that pot," said the rector—"he looks like famine itself."

"Paddy Dunn, will you come over here to his honour, Paddy! He's goin' to give you somethin'," said Connor, adding of his own accord the last clause of the message.

The tattered creature approached him with a gleam of expectation in his eyes that appeared like insanity.

"God bless your honour for your goodness!" exclaimed Paddy. "It's me that's in it, sir!—Paddy Dunn, sir, sure enough; but indeed I'm the next thing to my own ghost, sir, now—God help me!"

"What, and for whom, are you cooking?"

"Jist the smallest dhrop in life, sir, o' gruel, to keep the sowl in that lonely crathur, sir, the poor scholar."

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"Pray how long is it since you have eaten anything yourself?"

The tears burst from the eyes of the miserable creature as he replied:

"Before God in glory, your honour, an' in presence of his lordship here, I only got about what ud make betther nor half a male widin the last day, sir. 'Twas a *weeshy* grain o' male that I got from a friend; an' as Connor here tould me that this crathur had nothin' to make the gruel for him, why I shared it wid him, bekase he couldn't even beg it, sir, if he wanted it, an' him not able to walk yit."

The worthy pastor's eyes glistened with a moisture that did him honour. Without a word of observation he slipped a crown into the hand of Dunn, who looked at it as if he had been paralysed.

"Oh, thin," said he fervently, "may every hair on your honour's head become a mould-candle to light you into glory! The world's goodness is in your heart, sir; an' may all the blessins of heaven rain down upon you an' yours!"

The two gentlemen then gave assistance to the poor scholar, whom the bishop addressed in kind and encouraging language.

"Come to me, my good boy," he added, "and if, on further inquiry, I find that your conduct has been such as I believe it to have been, you may rest assured, provided also you continue worthy of my good opinion, that I shall be a friend and a protector to you. Call on me when you get well, and I will speak to you at greater length."

"Well," observed Connor, when they were gone, "the divil's own hard puzzle the bishop had me in about stalin' the milk. It wint agin the grain wid me to tell him the lie, so I had to invint a bit o' truth to keep my conscience clear; for sure there was not a man among us that could tell him, barrin' we said what we oughtn't to say. Doesn't all the world know that a man oughtn't to condimn himself. That was thruth, anyway; but divil a scruple I'd have in bammin' the other—not but that he's one o' the best of his sort. Paddy Dunn, quit lookin' at that

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crown, but get the shovel an' give the boy his dhrink—he's wantin' it."

The agitation of spirits produced by Jemmy's cheering interview with the bishop was, for two or three days afterwards, somewhat prejudicial to his convalescence. In less than a week, however, he was comfortably settled with Mr. O'Rorke's family, whose kindness proved to him quite as warm as he had expected.

When he had remained with them a few days, he resolved to recommence his studies under his tyrant master. He certainly knew that his future attendance at the school would be penal to him, but he had always looked forward to the accomplishment of his hopes as a task of difficulty and distress. The severity to be expected from the master could not, he thought, be greater than that which he had already suffered; he therefore decided, if possible, to complete his education under him.

The school, when Jemmy appeared in it, had been for more than an hour assembled, but the thinness of the attendance not only proved the woeful prevalence of sickness and distress in the parish, but sharpened the pedagogue's vinegar aspect into an expression of countenance singularly peevish and gloomy. When the lad entered, a murmur of pleasure and welcome ran through the scholars, and joy beamed forth from every countenance but that of his teacher. When the latter noticed this, his irritability rose above restraint, and he exclaimed—

"Silence! and apply to business, or I shall cause some of you to denude immediately. No school ever can prosper in which that *hirudo*, called a poor scholar, is permitted toleration. I thought, sarra, I told you to nidificate, and hatch your wild project undher some other wing than mine."

"I only entrate you," replied our poor hero, "to suffer me to join the class I left while I was sick, for about another year. I'll be very quiet and humble, and, as far as I can, will do everything you wish me."

"Ah! you are a crawling reptile," replied the savage, "and, in my opinion, nothing but a chate and impostor. I think you have imposed yourself on Mr. O'Brien for what

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you are not—that is, the son of an honest man. I have no doubt but many of your nearest relations died after having seen their own funerals. Your mother, you runagate, wasn't your father's wife, I'll be bail."

The spirit of the boy could bear this no longer; his eyes flashed, and his sinews stood out in the energy of deep indignation.

"It is false!" he exclaimed—"it is as false as your own cruel and cowardly heart, you wicked and unprincipled tyrant! In everything you have said of my father, mother, and friends, and of myself, too, you are a liar, from the hat on your head to the dirt undher your feet—a liar, a coward, and a villain!"

The fury of the miscreant was ungovernable: he ran at the still feeble lad, and by a stroke of his fist, dashed him senseless to the earth. There was now no large boys in the school to curb his resentment; he therefore kicked him in the back when he fell. Many voices exclaimed in alarm, "Oh! masther, sir, don't kill him! Oh! sir, dear, don't kill him! Don't kill poor Jemmy, sir, an' him still sick!"

"Kill him!" replied the master—"kill him, indeed! Faith, he'd be no common man who could kill him; he has as many lives in him as a cat! Sure, he can live behind a ditch, wid the faver on his back, widout dying; and he would live if he was stuck on the spire of a steeple."

In the meantime the boy gave no symptoms of returning life, and the master, after desiring a few of the scholars to bring him out to the air, became pale as death with apprehension. He immediately withdrew to his private apartment, which joined the schoolroom, and sent out his wife to assist in restoring him to animation. With some difficulty this was accomplished. The unhappy boy at once remembered what had just occurred, and the bitter tears gushed from his eyes as he knelt down and exclaimed, "Merciful Father of heaven and earth, have pity on me! You see my heart, great God! and what I did, I did for the best!"

"*Avourneen*," said the woman, "he's passionate, an' never mind him. Come in an' beg his pardon for calling him a

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liar, an' I'll become spokesman for you myself. Come, *acushla*, an' I'll get lave for you to stay in the school still."

"Oh, I'm hurted!" said the poor youth—"I'm hurted inwardly—somewhere about the back and about my ribs!" The pain he felt brought the tears down his pale cheeks. "I wish I was at home!" said he. "I'll give up all and go home!" The lonely boy then laid his head upon his hands, as he sat on the ground, and indulged in a long burst of sorrow!

"Well," said a manly-looking little fellow, whilst the tears stood in his eyes, "I'll tell my father this, anyhow. I know he won't let me come to this school any more. Here, Jemmy, is a piece of my bread; maybe it will do you good."

"I couldn't taste it, Frank dear," said Jemmy—"God bless you! but I couldn't taste it."

"Do," said Frank; "maybe it will bate back the pain."

"Don't ask me, Frank dear," said Jemmy; "I couldn't ate it; I'm hurted inwardly."

"Bad luck to me," exclaimed the indignant boy, "if ever my ten toes will darken this school door agin! By the livin' farmer, if they ax me at home to do it, I'll run away to my uncle's, so I will. Wait, Jemmy, I'll be big yet; an' be the blessed gospel that's about my neck, I'll give the same masther a shirtful of sore bones the holy an' blessed minute I'm able to do it."

Many of the other boys declared that they would acquaint their friends with the master's cruelty to the poor scholar; but Jemmy requested them not to do so, and said that he was determined to return home the moment he should be able to travel.

The affrighted woman could not prevail upon him to seek a reconciliation with her husband, although the expressions of the other scholars induced her to press him to it, even to entreaty. Jemmy arose, and with considerable difficulty reached the curate's house, found him at home, and, with tears in his eyes, related to him the atrocious conduct of the master.

"Very well," said this excellent man; "I am glad that I can venture to ride as far as Colonel B——'s to-morrow.

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You must accompany me; for decidedly such brutality cannot be permitted to go unpunished."

Jemmy knew that the curate was his friend; and although he would not himself have thought of summoning the master to answer for his barbarity, yet he acquiesced in the curate's opinion. He stopped that night in the house of the worthy man to whom Mr. O'Brien had recommended him on his first entering the town. It appeared in the morning, however, that he was unable to walk; the blows which he had received were then felt by him to be more dangerous than had been supposed. Mr. O'Brien, on being informed of this, procured a jaunting-car, on which they both sat, and at an easy pace reached the colonel's residence.

The curate was shown into an ante-room, and Jemmy sat in the hall; the colonel joined the former in a few minutes. He had been in England and on the Continent, accompanied by his family, for nearly the last three years, but had just returned, in order to take possession of a large property in land and money, to which he succeeded at a very critical moment, for his own estates were heavily encumbered. He was now proprietor of an additional estate, the rent-roll of which was six thousand per annum, and also master of eighty-five thousand pounds in the funds.

Mr. O'Brien, after congratulating him upon his good fortune, introduced the case of our hero as one which, in his opinion, called for the colonel's interposition as a magistrate.

"I have applied to you, sir," he proceeded, "rather than to any other of the neighbouring gentlemen, because I think this friendless lad has a peculiar claim upon any good offices you could render him."

"A claim upon me!—how is that, Mr. O'Brien?"

"The boy, sir, is not a native of this province. His father was formerly a tenant of yours—a man, as I have reason to believe, remarkable for good conduct and industry. It appears that his circumstances so long as he was your tenant were those of a comfortable, independent farmer. If the story which his son relates be true—and I, for one, believe it—his family have been dealt with in a manner unusually cruel and iniquitous. Your present agent, colonel, who is

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known in his own neighbourhood by the nickname of Yellow Sam, thrust him out of his farm when his wife was sick, for the purpose of putting into it a man who had married his illegitimate daughter. If this be found a correct account of the transaction I have no hesitation in saying that you, Colonel B——, as a gentleman of honour and humanity, will investigate the conduct of your agent, and see justice done to an honest man who must have been oppressed in your name and under colour of your authority."

"If my agent has dared to be unjust to a worthy tenant," said the colonel, "in order to provide for his bastard, by my sacred honour, he shall cease to be an agent of mine! I admit, certainly, that from some circumstances which transpired a few years ago I had reason to suspect his integrity. That, to be sure, was only so far as he and I were concerned. But, on the other hand, during one or two visits I made to the estate which he manages, I heard the tenants thank and praise him with much gratitude, and all that sort of thing. There was 'Thank your honour;' 'Long may you reign over us, sir;' and 'Oh, colonel, you've a mighty good man to your agent;' and so forth. I do not think, Mr. O'Brien, that he has acted so harshly, or that he would dare to do it. Upon my honour, I heard those warm expressions of gratitude from the lips of the tenants themselves."

"If you knew the people in general, colonel, so well as I do," replied the curate, "you would admit that such expressions are often either cuttingly ironical or the result of fear. You will always find, sir, that the independent portion of the people have least of this forced dissimulation among them. A dishonest and inhuman agent has in his own hands the irresponsible power of harassing and oppressing the tenantry under him. The class most hateful to the people are those low wretches who spring up from nothing into wealth, accumulated by dishonesty and rapacity. They are proud, overbearing, and jealous, even to vindictiveness, of the least want of respect. It is to such upstarts that the poorer classes are externally most civil; but it is also such persons whom they most hate and abhor. They flatter them to their faces, 'tis true, even to nausea; but they seldom spare them in their absence. Of this very class, I believe, is your agent,

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Yellow Sam; so that any favourable expressions you may have heard from your tenantry towards him were most probably the result of dissimulation and fear. Besides, sir, here is a testimonial from M'Evoy's parish priest, in which his father is spoken of as an honest, moral, and industrious man."

"If what you say, Mr. O'Brien, be correct," observed the colonel, "you know the Irish peasantry much better than I do. Decidedly I have always thought them in conversation exceedingly candid and sincere. With respect to testimonials from priests to landlords in behalf of their tenants, upon my honour I am sick of them. I actually received, about four years ago, such an excellent character of two tenants as induced me to suppose them worthy of encouragement. But what was the fact? Why, sir, they were two of the greatest firebrands on my estate, and put both me and my agent to great trouble and expense. No, sir, I wouldn't give a curse for a priest's testimonials upon such an occasion. These fellows were subsequently convicted of arson on the clearest evidence, and transported."

"Well, sir, I grant that you may have been misled in that instance. However, from what I have observed, the two great faults of Irish landlords are these:—In the first place, they suffer themselves to remain ignorant of their tenantry; so much so, indeed, that they frequently deny them access and redress when the poor people are anxious to acquaint them with their grievances; for it is usual with landlords to refer them to those very agents against whose cruelty and rapacity they are appealing. This is a *carte blanche* to the agent to trample upon them if he pleases. In the next place, Irish landlords too frequently employ ignorant and needy men to manage their estates—men who have no character, no property, or standing in society, beyond the reputation of being keen, shrewd, and active. These persons, sir, make fortunes; and what means can they have of accumulating wealth except by cheating either the landlord or his tenants? A history of their conduct would be a black catalogue of dishonesty, oppression, and treachery. Respectable men, resident on or near the estate, possessing both character and property, should always be selected for this

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important trust. But above all things, the curse of a tenantry is a *percentage* agent: he racks, and drives, and oppresses, without consideration either of market or produce, in order that his receipts may be ample, and his own income large."

"Why, Mr. O'Brien, you appear to be better acquainted with all this sort of thing than I, who am a landed proprietor."

"By-the-bye, sir, without meaning you any disrespect, it is the landlords of Ireland who know least about the great mass of its inhabitants, and, I might also add, about its history, its literature, the manners of the people, their customs and their prejudices. The peasantry know this, and too often practise upon their ignorance. There is a landlord's *vade mecum* sadly wanted in Ireland, colonel."

"Well, I shall certainly inquire into this case, and if I find that Yellow Sam has been playing the oppressor, out he goes. I am now able to manage him, which I could not readily do before, for, by-the-bye, he had mortgages on my property."

"I would take it, colonel, as a personal favour if you would investigate the transaction I have mentioned."

"Undoubtedly I shall, and that very soon. But about this outrage committed against the boy himself? We had better take his informations, and punish the fellow."

"Certainly; I think that is the best way. His conduct to the poor youth has been merciless and detestable. We must put him out of this part of the country."

"Call the lad in. In this case I shall draw up the informations myself, although Gregg usually does that."

Jemmy, assisted by the curate, entered the room, and the colonel desired him, as he appeared ill, to sit down.

"What is your name?" asked the colonel.

"James M'Evoy," he replied. "I'm the son, sir, of a man who was once a tenant of yours."

"Ay! and pray how did he cease to be a tenant of mine?"

"Why, sir, your agent, Yallow Sam, put him out of our farm when my poor mother was on her sick-bed. He chated my father, sir, out of some money—part of our rent it was,

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that he didn't give him a receipt for. When my father went to him afterwards for the receipt, Yallow Sam abused him, and called him a rogue, and that, sir, was what no man ever called my father either before or since. My father, sir, threatened to tell you about it, and you came to the country soon after; but Yallow Sam got very great wid my father at that time, and sent him to sell bullocks for him about fifty miles off, but when he came back again you had left the country. Thin, sir, Yallow Sam said nothing till the next half-year's rent became due, whin he came down on my father for all—that is, what he hadn't got the receipt for, and the other gale—and without any warning in the world put him out. My father offered to pay all; but he said he was a rogue, and that you had ordered him off the estate. In less than a week after this he put a man that married a bastard daughter of his own into our house and place. That's God's truth, sir, and you'll find it so if you inquire into it. It's a common trick of his to keep back receipts, and make the tenants pay double." [1]

"Sacred heaven, Mr. O'Brien, can this be possible?"

"Your best way, colonel, is to inquire into it."

"Was not your father able to educate you at home, my boy?"

"No, sir; we soon got into poverty after we left your farm; and another thing, sir, there was no Latin school in our neighbourhood."

"For what purpose did you become a poor scholar?"

"Why, sir, I hoped one day or other to be able to raise my father and mother out of the distress that Yallow Sam brought on us."

"By heaven, a noble aim and a noble sentiment! And what has this d——d fellow of a schoolmaster done to you?"

"Why, sir, yesterday, when I went back to the school, he abused me, and said that he supposed most of my relations were hanged—spoke ill of my father, and said that my mother"—here the tears started to his eyes—he sobbed aloud.

[1] This is fact. The individual here alluded to frequently kept back receipts when receiving rents, under pretence of hurry, and afterwards compelled the tenants to pay the same gale again!

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"Go on, and be cool," said the colonel; "what did he say of your mother?"

"He said, sir, that she was never married to my father. I know I was wrong, sir—but if it was the king on his throne that said it of my mother, I'd call him a liar. I called him a liar, and a coward, and a villain. Ay, sir, and if I had been able, I would have trampled him under my feet."

The colonel looked steadily at him; but the open, clear eye which the boy turned upon him was full of truth and independence.

"And you will find," said the soldier, "that this spirited defence of your mother will be the most fortunate action of your life. Well—he struck you then, did he?"

"He knocked me down, sir, with his fist—then kicked me in the back and sides. I think some of my ribs are broke."

"Ay!—no doubt, no doubt," said the colonel. "And you were only after recovering from this fever which is so prevalent?"

"I wasn't a week out of it, sir."

"Well, my boy, we shall punish him for you."

"Sir, would you hear me for a word or two, if it would be pleasing to you?"

"Speak on," said the colonel.

"I would rather change his punishment to—I would—that is—if it would be agreeable to you—it's this, sir—I wouldn't throuble you now against the master, if you'd be pleased to rightify my father, and punish Yallow Sam. Oh, sir, for God's sake, put my heart-broken father into his farm again! If you would, sir, I could shed my blood or lay down my life for you, or for any belonging to you. I'm but a poor boy, sir, low and humble; but they say there's a greater Being than the greatest in this world, that listens to the just prayers of the poor and friendless. I was never happy, sir, since we left it—neither was any of us; and when we'd sit, cowld and hungry, about our hearth, we used to be talking of the pleasant days we spent in it, till the tears would be smothered in curses against him that put us out of it. Oh, sir, if you could know all that a poor and honest family suffers when they are thrown into distress by want of feeling in their

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landlords, or by the dishonesty of agents, you would consider my father's case. I'm his favourite son, sir, and good right have I to speak for him. If you could know the sorrow, the misery, the drooping down of the spirits, that lies upon the countenances and the hearts of such people, you wouldn't, as a man and a Christian, think it below you to spread happiness and contentment among them again. In the morning they rise to a day of hardship, no matter how bright and cheerful it may be to others—nor is there any hope of a brighter day for them; and at night they go to their hard beds to strive to sleep away their hunger, in spite of cowld and want. If you could see how the father of a family, after striving to bear up, sinks down at last; if you could see the look he gives at the childher that he would lay down his heart's blood for, when they sit naked and hungry about him; and the mother, too, with her kind word and sorrowful smile, proud of them in all their destitution, but her heart breaking silently all the time, her face wasting away, her eye dim, and her strength gone! Sir, make one such family happy—for all this has been in my father's house! Give us back our light spirits, our pleasant days, and our cheerful hearts again! We lost them through the villainy of your agent. Give them back to us, for you can do it; but you can never pay us for what we suffered. Give us, sir, our farm, our green fields, our house, and every spot and nook that we had before. We love the place, sir, for its own sake; it is the place of our fathers, and our hearts are in it. I often think I see the smooth river that runs through it, and the meadows that I played in when I was a child—the glen behind our house, the mountains that rose before us when we left the door, the thornbush at the garden, the hazels in the glen, the little bleach-green beside the river. Oh, sir, don't blame me for crying, for they are all before my eyes, in my ears, and in my heart! Many a summer evening have I gone to the march-ditch of the farm that my father's now in, and looked at the place I loved till the tears blinded me, and I asked it as a favour of God to restore us to it! Sir, we are in great poverty at home—before God we are; and my father's heart is breaking!"

The colonel drew his breath deeply, rubbed his hands, and

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as he looked at the fine countenance of the boy—expressing, as it did, enthusiasm and sorrow—his eyes lightened with a gleam of indignation.

"Mr. O'Brien," said he, "what do you think? And this noble boy is the son of a man who belongs to a class of which I am ignorant! By heavens, we landlords are, I fear, a guilty race."

"Not at all, sir," replied the curate. "There are noble exceptions among them; their faults are more the faults of omission than commission."

"Well, well, no matter. Come, I will draw up the informations against this man. Afterwards I have something to say to you, my boy," he added, addressing Jemmy, "that will not, I trust, be unpleasant."

He then drew up the informations as strongly as he could word them, after which Jemmy deposed to their truth and accuracy; and the colonel, rubbing his hands again, said—

"I will have the fellow secured. When you go into town, Mr. O'Brien, I'll thank you to call on Meares and hand him these. He will lodge the miscreant in limbo this very night."

Jemmy then thanked him, and was about to withdraw, when the colonel desired him to remain a little longer.

"Now," said he, "your father has been treated inhumanly, I believe; but no matter—that is not the question. Your sentiments, and conduct, and your affection for your parents are noble, my boy. At present, I say, the question is not whether the history of your father's wrongs be true or false; you at least believe it to be true. From this forward—but, by-the-bye, I forgot—how could your becoming a poor scholar relieve your parents?"

"I intended to become a priest, sir, and then to help them."

"Ay! so I thought. And provided your father were restored to his farm, would you be still disposed to become a priest?"

"I would, sir; next to helping my father, that is what I wish to be."

"Mr. O'Brien, what would it cost to prepare him respect-

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ably for the priesthood?—I mean, to defray his expenses until he completes his preparatory education, in the first place, and afterwards during his residence in Maynooth?"

"I think two hundred pounds, sir, would do it easily and respectably."

"I do not think it would. However, do you send him —but first let me ask what progress he has already made?"

"He has read—in fact he is nearly prepared to enter Maynooth. His progress has been very rapid."

"Put him to some respectable boarding-school for a year, then let him enter Maynooth, and I will bear the expense. But remember I do not adopt this course in consequence of his father's history—not I, by Jupiter; I do it on his own account. He is a noble boy, and full of fine qualities, if they be not nipped by neglect and poverty. I loved my father myself, and fought a duel on his account; and I honour the son who has spirit to defend his absent parent."

"This is a most surprising turn in the boy's fortunes, colonel."

"He deserves it. A soldier, Mr. O'Brien, is not without his enthusiasm, nor can he help admiring it in others when nobly and virtuously directed. To see a boy in the midst of poverty, encountering the hardships and difficulties of life, with the hope of raising up his parents from distress to independence, has a touch of sublimity in it."

"Ireland, colonel, abounds with instances of similar virtue, brought out, probably, into fuller life and vigour by the sad changes and depressions which are weighing down the people. In her glens, on her bleak mountain-sides, and in her remotest plains, such examples of pure affection, uncommon energy, and humble heroism are to be seen; but, unfortunately, few persons of rank or observation mingle with the Irish people, and their many admirable qualities pass away without being recorded in the literature of their country. They are certainly a strange people, colonel—almost an anomaly in the history of the human race. They are the only people who can rush out from the very virtues of private life to the perpetration of crimes at which we shudder. There

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is, to be sure, an outcry about their oppression; but that is wrong. Their indigence and ignorance are rather the result of neglect—of neglect, sir, from the government of the country—from the earl to the squireen."

"Well, well, I believe what you say is too true. But touching the records of virtue in humble life, pray who would record it when nothing goes down nowadays but what is either monstrous or fashionable."

"Very true, colonel; yet, in my humble opinion, a virtuous Irish peasant is far from being so low a character as a profligate man of rank."

"Well, well, well! Come, Mr. O'Brien, we will drop the subject. In the meantime, touching this boy, as I said, he must be looked to, for he has that in him which ought not to be neglected. We shall now see that this d——d pedagogue be punished for his cruelty."

The worthy colonel in a short time dismissed poor Jemmy with an exulting heart; but not until he had placed a sufficient sum in the curate's hands for enabling him to make a respectable appearance. Medical advice was also procured for him, by which he soon overcame the effects of his master's brutality.

On their way home Jemmy related to his friend the conversation which he had had with his bishop in the shed, and the kind interest which that gentleman had taken in his situation and prospects. Mr. O'Brien told him that the bishop was an excellent man, possessing much discrimination and benevolence; "and so," said he, "is the Protestant clergyman who accompanied him. They have both gone among the people during this heavy visitation of disease and famine, administering advice and assistance; restraining them from those excesses which they sometimes commit, when, driven by hunger, they attack provision-carts, bakers' shops, or the houses of farmers who are known to possess a stock of meal or potatoes. God knows, it is an excusable kind of robbery; yet it is right to restrain them."

"It is a pleasant thing, sir, to see clergymen of every religion working together to make the people happy."

"It is certainly so," replied the curate; "and I am bound to say, in justice to the Protestant clergy, that there is no class

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of men in Ireland, who do so much good without distinction of creed or party. They are generally kind and charitable to the poor; so are their wives and daughters. I have often known them to cheer the sick-bed—to assist the widow and the orphan—to advise and admonish the profligate, and even to reclaim them. But now about your own prospects—I think you should go and see your family as soon as your health permits you."

"I would give my right hand," replied Jemmy, "just to see them, if it was only for five minutes; but I cannot go. I vowed that I would never enter my native parish until I should become a Catholic clergyman. I vowed that, sir, to God; and with His assistance I will keep my vow."

"Well," said the curate, "you are right. And now let me give you a little advice. In the first place, learn to speak as correctly as you can; lay aside the vulgarisms of conversation peculiar to the common people; and speak precisely as you would write. By-the-bye, you acquitted yourself to admiration with the colonel. A little stumbling there was in the beginning, but you got over it. You see, James, the force of truth and simplicity. I could scarcely restrain my tears while you spoke."

"If I had not been in earnest, sir, I could never have spoken as I did."

"You never could. Truth, James, is the foundation of all eloquence. He who knowingly speaks what is not true may dazzle and perplex; but he will never touch with that power and pathos which spring from truth. Fiction is successful only by borrowing her habiliments. Now, James, for a little more advice. Don't let the idea of having been a poor scholar deprive you of self-respect; neither let your unexpected turn of fortune cause you to forget what you have suffered; hold a middle course; be firm and independent; without servility on the one hand, or vanity on the other. You have also too much good sense, and, I hope, too much religion, to ascribe what this day has brought forth in your behalf to any other cause than God. It has pleased Him to raise you from misery to ease and comfort; to Him, therefore, be it referred, and to Him be your thanks and prayers directed. You owe Him much, for you now can perceive

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the value of what He has done for you! May His name be blessed!"

Jemmy was deeply affected by the kindness of his friend; for such, in friendship's truest sense, was he to him. He expressed the obligations which he owed him, and promised to follow the excellent advice he had just received.

The schoolmaster's conduct to the poor scholar had, before the close of the day on which it occurred, been known through the parish. Thady O'Rorke, who had just recovered from the epidemic, felt so bitterly exasperated at the outrage that he brought his father to the parish priest, to whom he gave a detailed account of all that our hero and the poorer children of the school had suffered. In addition to this, he went among the more substantial farmers of the neighbourhood, whose co-operation he succeeded in obtaining, for the laudable purpose of driving the tyrant out of the parish.

Jemmy, who still lived at the "House of Entertainment," on hearing what they intended to do, begged Mr. O'Brien to allow him, provided the master should be removed from the school, to decline prosecuting him.

"He has been cruel to me, no doubt," he added; "still I cannot forget that his cruelty has been the means of changing my condition in life so much for the better. If he is put out of the parish, it will be punishment enough; and, to say the truth, sir, I can now forgive everybody. Maybe, had I been still neglected I might punish him; but, in the meantime, to show him and the world that I didn't deserve his severity, I forgive him."

Mr. O'Brien was not disposed to check a sentiment that did the boy's heart so much honour; he waited on the colonel the next morning, acquainted him with Jemmy's wishes, and the indictment was quashed immediately after the schoolmaster's removal from his situation.

Our hero's personal appearance was by this time incredibly changed for the better. His countenance, naturally expressive of feeling, firmness, and intellect, now appeared to additional advantage; so did his whole person when dressed in a decent suit of black. No man acquainted with life can be ignorant of the improvement which genteel apparel pro-

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duces in the carriage, tone of thought, and principles of an individual. It gives a man confidence, self-respect, and a sense of equality with his companions; it inspires him with energy, independence, delicacy of sentiment, courtesy of manner, and elevation of language. The face becomes manly, bold and free; the brow open, and the eye clear. There is no slinking through narrow lanes and back streets; but, on the contrary, the smoothly-dressed man steps out with a determination not to spare the earth, or to walk as if he trod on eggs or razors. No; he brushes onward; is the first to accost his friends; gives a careless bow to this, a bluff nod to that, and a patronising "How d'ye do" to a third who is worse dressed than himself. Trust me, kind reader, that good clothes are calculated to advance a man in life nearly as well as good principles, especially in a world like this, where external appearance is taken as the exponent of what is beneath it.

Jemmy, by the advice of his friend, now waited upon the bishop, who was much surprised at the uncommon turn of fortune which had taken place in his favour. He also expressed his willingness to help him forward, as far as lay in his power, towards the attainment of his wishes. In order to place the boy directly under suitable patronage, Mr. O'Brien suggested that the choice of the school should be left to the bishop. This, perhaps, flattered him a little, for who is without his weaknesses? A school near the metropolis was accordingly fixed upon, to which Jemmy, now furnished with a handsome outfit, was accordingly sent. There we will leave him, reading with eagerness and assiduity, whilst we return to look after Colonel B—— and his agent.

One morning after James's departure, the colonel's servant waited upon Mr. O'Brien, with a note from his master, intimating a wish to see him. He lost no time in waiting upon that gentleman, who was then preparing to visit the estate which he had so long neglected.

"I am going," said he, "to see how my agent, Yellow Sam, as they call him, and my tenants agree. It is my determination, Mr. O'Brien, to investigate the circumstances attending the removal of our *protégé's* father. I shall, moreover, look closely into the state and feelings of my

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my tenants in general. It is probable I shall visit many of them, and certain that I will inquire into the character of this man."

"It is better late than never, colonel; but still, though I am a friend to the people, yet I would recommend you to be guided by great caution, and the evidence of respectable and disinterested men only. You must not certainly entertain all the complaints you may hear without clear proof, for I regret to say that too many of the idle and political portion of the peasantry are apt to throw the blame of their own folly and ignorance — yes, and of their crimes also—upon those who in no way have occasioned either their poverty or their wickedness."

"Mr. O'Brien, you would make an excellent agent."

"I have studied the people, sir, and know them. I have breathed the atmosphere of their prejudices, habits, manners, customs, and superstitions. I have felt them all myself, as they feel them; but I trust I have got above their influence where it is evil, for there are many fine touches of character among them which I should not willingly part with. No, sir, I should make a bad agent, having no capacity for transacting business. I could direct and overlook, but nothing more."

"Well, then, I shall set out to-morrow; and in the meantime permit me to say that I am deeply sensible of your kindness in pointing out my duty as an Irish landlord, conscious that I have too long neglected it."

"Kindness, colonel, is the way to the Irish heart. You will hear both sides of the question before you act?"

"Certainly. I have written to my agent to say that I shall look very closely into my own affairs on this occasion. I thought it fair to give him notice."

"Well, sir, I wish you all success."

"Farewell, Mr. O'Brien; I shall see you immediately after my return."

The colonel performed his journey by slow stages until he reached "the hall of his fathers"—for it was such, although he had not for years resided in it. It presented the wreck of a fine old mansion, situated within a crescent of stately beeches, whose moss-covered and ragged trunks gave symp-

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toms of decay and neglect. The lawn had been once beautiful, and the demesne a noble one; but that which blights the industry of the tenant—the curse of absenteeism—had also left the marks of ruin stamped upon every object around him. The lawn was little better than a common; the pond was thick with weeds and sluggish water-plants, that almost covered its surface; and a light, elegant bridge, that spanned a river which ran before the house, was also moss-grown and dilapidated. The hedges were mixed up with briers, the gates broken or altogether removed; the fields were rank with the ruinous luxuriance of weeds, and the grass-grown avenues spoke of solitude and desertion. The still appearance, too, of the house itself, and the absence of smoke from its time-tinged chimneys—all told a tale which constitutes one, perhaps the greatest, portion of Ireland's misery! Even then he did not approach it with the intention of residing there during his sojourn in the country. It was not habitable, nor had it been so for years. The road by which he travelled lay near it, and he could not pass without looking upon the place where a long line of gallant ancestors had succeeded each other, lived their span, and disappeared in their turn.

He contemplated it for some time in a kind of reverie. There it stood, sombre and silent—its grey walls mouldering away—its windows dark and broken; like a man forsaken by the world, compelled to bear the storms of life without the hand of a friend to support him, though age and decay render him less capable of enduring them. For a moment fancy repeopled it: again the stir of life, pastime, mirth, and hospitality echoed within its walls; the train of his long-departed relatives returned; the din of rude and boisterous enjoyment peculiar to the times; the cheerful tumult of the hall at dinner; the family feuds and festivities; the vanities and the passions of those who now slept in dust—all—all came before him once more, and played their part in the vision of the moment!

As he walked on, the flitting wing of a bat struck him lightly in its flight; he awoke from the remembrances which crowded on him, and resuming his journey, soon arrived at the inn of the nearest town, where he stopped that night.

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The next morning he saw his agent for a short time, but declined entering on business. For a few days more he visited most of the neighbouring gentry, from whom he received sufficient information to satisfy him that neither himself nor his agent was popular among his tenantry. Many flying reports of the agent's dishonesty and tyranny were mentioned to him, and in every instance he took down the names of the parties, in order to ascertain the truth. M'Evoy's case had occurred more than ten years before, but he found that the remembrance of the poor man's injury was strongly and bitterly retained in the recollections of the people—a circumstance which extorted from the blunt but somewhat sentimental soldier a just observation. "I think," said he, "that there are no people in the world who remember an injury or a kindness so long as the Irish."

When the tenants were apprised of his presence among them, they experienced no particular feeling upon the subject. During all his former visits to his estate he appeared merely the creature and puppet of his agent, who never acted the bully, nor tricked himself out in his brief authority, more imperiously than he did before him. The knowledge of this damped them, and rendered any expectations of redress or justice from the landlord a matter not to be thought of.

"If he wasn't so great a man," they observed, "who thinks it below him to speak to his tenants, or hear their complaints, there ud be some hope. But that rip of hell, Yallow Sam, can wind him round his finger like a thread, an' does too. There's no use in thinkin' to petition him, or to lodge a complaint against Stony Heart, for the first thing he'd do ud be to put it into yallow boy's hands, an thin, God be merciful to thim that ud complain. No, no; the best way is to wait till Sam's masther[1] takes him; an' who knows but that ud be sooner nor we think."

"They say," another would reply, "that the colonel is a good gintleman, for all that, an' that if he could once know the truth, he'd pitch the 'yallow boy' to the 'ould boy.'"

No sooner was it known by his tenantry that the head

[1] The devil.

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landlord was disposed to redress their grievances and hear their complaints, than the smothered attachment, which long neglect had nearly extinguished, now burst forth with uncommon power.

"Augh! by this an' by that, the thrue blood's in him still. The rale gintleman to dale wid for ever! We knew he only wanted to come at the thruth, an' thin he'd back us agin the villain that harrished us! To the divil wid skamin' upstarts, that hasn't the ould blood in thim! What are they but sconces an' chates, every one o' thim, barrin' an odd one, for a wondher!"

The colonel's estate now presented a scene of gladness and bustle. Every person who felt in the slightest degree aggrieved got his petition drawn up; and but that we fear our sketch is already too long, we would gratify the reader's curiosity by submitting a few of them. It is sufficient to say that they came to him in every shape—in all the variety of diction that the poor English language admits of—in the schoolmaster's best copy-hand, and choicest sesquipedalianism of pedantry—in the severer but more scriptural terms of the parish clerk—in the engrossing hand and legal phrase of the attorney's—in the military form, evidently redolent of the shrewd old pensioner—and in the classical style of the young priest; for each and all of the foregoing were enlisted in the cause of those who had petitions to send in "to the colonel himself, God bless him!"

Early in the morning of the day on which the colonel had resolved to compare the complaints of his tenantry with the character which his agent gave him of the complainants, he sent for the former, and the following dialogue took place between them.

"Good morning, Mr. Carson. Excuse me for requesting your presence to-day earlier than usual. I have taken it into my head to know something of my own tenantry, and as they have pestered me with petitions and letters and complaints, I am anxious to have your opinion, as you know them better than I do."

"Before we enter on business, colonel, allow me to inquire if you feel relieved of that bilious attack you complained of the day before yesterday? I'm of a bilious

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habit myself, and know something about the management of digestion."

"A good digestion is an excellent thing, Carson. As for me, I drank too much claret with my friend B——y; and there's the secret. I don't like cold wines; they never agree with me."

"Nor do I; they are not constitutional. Your father was celebrated for his wines, colonel. I remember an anecdote told me by Captain Ferguson—By-the-bye, do you know where Ferguson could be found now, sir?"

"Not I. What wines do you drink, Carson?"

"A couple of glasses of sherry, sir, at dinner; and about ten o'clock, a glass of brandy and water."

"Carson, you are sober and prudent. Well, about these cursed petitions; you must help me to dispose of them. Why, a man would think, by the tenor of them, that these tenants of mine are ground to dust by a tyrant."

"Ah, colonel, you know little about these fellows. They would make black white. Go and take a ride, sir, return about four o'clock, and I will have everything as it ought to be."

"I wish to heaven, Carson, I had your talents for business. Do you think my tenants attached to me?"

"Attached, sir! they are ready to cut your throat or mine on the first convenient opportunity. You could not conceive their knavishness and dishonesty, except you happened to be an agent for a few years."

"So I have been told, and I am resolved to remove every dishonest tenant from my estate. Is there not a man, for instance, called Brady? He has sent me a long-winded petition here. What do you think of him?"

"Show me the petition, colonel."

"I cannot lay my hand on it just now; but you shall see it. In the meantime, what's your opinion of the fellow?"

"Brady! Why, I know the man particularly well. He is one of my favourites. What the deuce could the fellow petition about, though? I promised the other day to renew his lease for him."

"Oh, then, if he be a favourite of yours, his petition may go to the devil, I suppose? Is the man honest?"

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"Remarkably so; and has paid his rents very punctually. He is one of our safest tenants."

"Do you know a man called Cullen?"

"The most litigious scoundrel on the estate."

"Indeed! Oh, then, we must look into the merits of his petition, as he is not honest. Had he been honest like Brady, Carson, I should have dismissed it."

"Cullen, sir, is a dangerous fellow. Do you know, that rascal has charged me with keeping back his receipts, and with making him pay double rent!—ha, ha, ha! Upon my honour, it's fact."

"The scoundrel! We shall sift him to some purpose, however."

"If you take my advice, sir, you will send him about his business; for if it be once known that you listen to malicious petitions, my authority over such villains as Cullen is lost."

"Well, I set him aside for the present. Here's a long list of others, all of whom have been oppressed, forsooth. Is there a man called M'Evoy on my estate?—Dominick M'Evoy, I think."

"M'Evoy! Why, that rascal, sir, has not been your tenant for ten years! His petition, colonel, is a key to the nature of their grievances in general."

"I believe you, Carson—most implicitly do I believe that. Well, about this rascal?"

"Why, it is so long since, that, upon my honour, I cannot exactly remember the circumstances of his misconduct. He ran away."

"Who is in his farm now, Carson?"

"A very decent man, sir—one Jackson, an exceedingly worthy, honest, industrious fellow. I take some credit to myself for bringing Jackson on your estate."

"Is Jackson married? Has he a family?"

"Married! Let me see! Why—yes—I believe he is. Oh, by-the-bye, now I think of it, he is married, and to a very respectable woman, too. Certainly, I remember—she usually accompanies him when he pays his rents."

"Then your system must be a good one, Carson; you weed out the idle and profligate, to replace them by the honest and industrious?"

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"Precisely so, sir; that is my system."

"Yet there are agents who invert your system in some cases; who drive out the honest and industrious, and encourage the idle and profligate; who connive at them, Carson, and fill the estates they manage with their own dependants or relatives, as the case may be. You have been always opposed to this, and I'm glad to hear it."

"No man, Colonel B——, filling the situation which I have the honour to hold under you, could study your interests with greater zeal and assiduity. God knows, I have had so many quarrels, and feuds, and wranglings with these fellows, in order to squeeze money out of them to meet your difficulties, that, upon my honour, I think if it required five dozen oaths to hang me, they could be procured upon your estate. An agent, colonel, who is faithful to the landlord, is seldom popular with the tenants."

"I can't exactly see that, Carson; and I have known an unpopular landlord rendered highly popular by the judicious management of an enlightened and honest agent, who took no bribes, Carson, and who neither extorted from nor ground the tenantry under him—something like a counterpart of yourself. But you may be right in general."

"Is there anything particular, colonel, in which I can assist you now?"

"Not now. I was anxious to hear the character of those fellows from you, who know them. Come down about eleven or twelve o'clock; these petitioners will be assembled, and you may be able to assist me."

"Colonel, remember I forewarn you that you are plunging into a mesh of difficulties which you will never be able to disentangle. Leave the fellows to me, sir; I know how to deal with them. Besides, upon my honour, you are not equal to it in point of health. You look ill. Pray allow me to take home their papers, and I shall have all clear and satisfactory before two o'clock. They know my method, sir."

"They do, Carson, they do; but I am anxious they should also know mine. Besides, it will amuse me, for I want excitement. Good day for the present; you will be down about twelve, or one at the furthest."

"Certainly, sir. Good morning, colonel."

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The agent was too shrewd a man not to perceive that there were touches of cutting irony in some of the colonel's expressions which he did not like. There was a dryness, too, in the tone of his voice and words, blended with a copiousness of good-humour, which, taken altogether, caused him to feel uncomfortable. He could have wished the colonel at the devil; yet had the said colonel never been more familiar in his life, nor, with one or two exceptions, readier to agree with almost every observation made to him.

"Well," thought he, "he may act as he pleases; I have feathered my nest, at all events, and disregard him."

Colonel B——, in fact, ascertained, with extreme regret, that something was necessary to be done to secure the good-will of his tenants; that the conduct of his agent had been marked by rapacity and bribery almost incredible. He had exacted from the tenantry in general the performance of duty-labour to such an extent that his immense agricultural farms were managed with little expense to himself. If a poor man's corn were drop ripe, or his hay in a precarious state, or his turf undrawn, he must suffer his oats, hay, and turf to be lost, in order to secure the crops of the agent. If he had spirit to refuse, he must expect to become a martyr to his resentment. In renewing leases his extortions were exorbitant; ten, thirty, forty, and fifty guineas he claimed as a fee for his favour, according to the ability of the party; yet this was quite distinct from the renewal fine, and went into his own pocket. When such "glove money" was not to be had, he would accept a cow or horse, to which he usually made a point to take a fancy; or he wanted to purchase a firkin of butter at that particular time, and the poor people usually made every sacrifice to avoid his vengeance. It is due to Colonel B—— to say that he acted in the investigation of his agent's conduct with the strictest honour and impartiality. He scrutinised every statement thoroughly; pleaded for him as temperately as he could; found, or pretended to find, extenuating motives for his most indefensible proceedings; but all would not do. The cases were so clear and evident against him, even in the opinion of the neighbouring gentry, who had been for years looking upon the system of selfish misrule which

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he practised, that at length the generous colonel's blood boiled with indignation in his veins at the contemplation of his villainy. He accused himself bitterly for neglecting his duties as a landlord, and felt both remorse and shame for having wasted his time, health, and money in the fashionable dissipation of London and Paris, whilst a cunning, unprincipled upstart played the vampire with his tenants, and turned his estate into a scene of oppression and poverty. Nor was this all: he had been endeavouring to bring the property more and more into his own clutches—a point which he would ultimately have gained had not the colonel's late succession to so large a fortune enabled him to meet his claims.

At one o'clock the tenants were all assembled about the inn door, where the colonel had resolved to hold his little court. The agent himself soon arrived, as did several other gentlemen, the colonel's friends, who knew the people, and could speak to their character.

The first man called was Dominick M'Evoy. No sooner was his name uttered than a mild, poor-looking man, rather advanced in years, came forward.

"I beg your pardon, colonel," said Carson, "here is some mistake; this man is not one of your tenants. You may remember I told you so this morning."

"I remember it," replied the colonel; "this is 'the rascal' you spoke of—is he not?—M'Evoy," the colonel proceeded, "you will reply to my questions with strict truth. You will state nothing but what has occurred between you and my agent; you must not even turn a circumstance in your own favour, nor against Mr. Carson, by either adding to or taking away from it more or less than the truth. I say this to you and to all present; for, upon my honour, I shall dismiss the first case in which I discover a falsehood."

"Wid the help o' the Almighty, sir, I'll state nothing but the bare thruth?"

"How long are you off my estate?"

"Ten years, your honour, or a little more."

"How came you to run away out of your farm?"

"Run away, your honour? God He knows I didn't run away, sir. The whole counthry knows that."

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"Yes, run away! Mr. Carson, here, stated to me this morning that you ran away. He is a gentleman of integrity, and would not state a falsehood."

"I beg your pardon, colonel, not positively. I told you I did not exactly remember the circumstances; I said I thought so; but I may be wrong, for indeed my memory of facts is not good. M'Evoy, however, is a very honest man, and I have no doubt will state everything as it happened, fairly and without malice."

"An honest 'rascal,' I suppose you mean, Mr. Carson," said the colonel bitterly. "Proceed, M'Evoy."

M'Evoy stated the circumstances precisely as the reader is already acquainted with them; after which the colonel turned round to his agent, and asked what he had to say in reply.

"You cannot expect, Colonel B——," he replied, "that with such a multiplicity of business on my hands I could remember, after a lapse of ten years, the precise state of this particular case. Perhaps I may have some papers, a memorandum or so, at home, that may throw light upon it. At present I can only say that the man failed in his rents, I ejected him, and put a better tenant in his place. I cannot see a crime in that."

"Plase your honour," replied M'Evoy, "I can prove by them that's standin' to the fore this minute, as well as by this written affidavit, sir, that I offered him the full rint, havin', at the same time, as God is my judge, ped part of it afore."

"That is certainly false—an untrue and malicious statement," said Carson. "I now remember that the cause of my resentment—yes, of my just resentment against you, was your reporting that I received your rent and withheld your receipt."

"Then," observed the colonel, "there has been more than one charge of that nature brought against you? You mentioned another to me this morning, if I mistake not."

"I have made my oath, your honour, of the thruth of it; an' here is a dacent man, sir, a Protestant, that lent me the money, an' was present when I offered it to him. Mr. Smith, come forrid, sir, an' spake up for the poor man, as you're always willin' to do."

"I object to his evidence," said Carson; "he is my open enemy."

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"I am your enemy, Mr. Carson, or, rather, the enemy of your corruption and want of honesty," said Smith; "but, as you say, an open one. I scorn to say behind your back what I wouldn't say to your face. Right well you know I was present when he tendered you his rent. I lent him part of it. But why did you and your bailiffs turn him out when his wife was on her sick-bed? Allowing that he could not pay his rent, was that any reason you should do so barbarous an act as to drag a woman from her sick-bed, and she at the point of death? But we know your reasons for it."

"Gentlemen," said the colonel, "pray what character do M'Evoy and Smith here bear in the country?"

"We have known them both for years to be honest, conscientious men," said those whom he addressed: "such is their character, and in our opinion they well deserve it."

"God bless you, gintlemen!" said M'Evoy—"God bless your honours for your kind words! I'm sure, for my own part, I hope I'll always desarve your good opinion, although but a poor man now, God help me!"

"Pray who occupies the farm at present, Mr. Carson?"

"The man I mentioned to you this morning, sir. His name is Jackson."

"And pray, Mr. Carson, who is his wife?"

"Oh, by-the-bye, colonel, that's a little too close. I see the gentlemen smile; but they know I must beg to decline answering that question—not that it matters much. We have all sown our wild oats in our time—myself as well as another."

"The fact, under other circumstances," observed the colonel, "could never draw an inquiry from me; but as it is connected with, or probably has occasioned, a gross, unfeeling, and an unjust act of oppression towards an honest man, I therefore alluded to it, as exhibiting the motives from which you acted. She is your illegitimate daughter, sir?"

"She's one o' the baker's dozen o' them, plase your honour," observed a humorous little Presbyterian, with a sarcastic face and sharp northern accent—"for feth, sir, for my part, a thenk he hes one on every hillhead. A'll count, your honour, on my fingers, a roun' half-dozen, aal on your estate, sir, featherin' their nests as fast as they can."

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"Is this Jackson a good tenant, Mr. Carson?"

"I gave you his character this morning, Colonel B——."

"Hout, colonel," said the Presbyterian, "deil a penny rent the man pays at aal, at aal. A'll swear a hev it from Jackson's own lips. He made him a bailey, sir; he suts rent free. Ask the man, sir, for his receipts, an' a'll warrant the truth will come out."

"I have secured Jackson's attendance," said the colonel; "let him be called in."

The man in a few minutes entered.

"Jackson," said the colonel, "how long is it since you paid Mr. Carson here any rent?"

Jackson looked at Carson for his cue; but the colonel rose up indignantly. "Fellow!" he proceeded, "if you tamper with me a single moment, you shall find Mr. Carson badly able to protect you. If you speak falsehood, be it at your peril."

"By jing, sir," said Jackson, "a'll say nothin' against my father-in-laa, an' a don't care who teks it well or ull. A was jist tekin' a gun[1] with a fren' or two—an' d—— me, a say, a'll stick to my father-in-laa, for he hes stuck to me."

"You appear to be a hardened, drunken wretch," observed the colonel. "Will you be civil enough to show your last receipt for rent?"

"Wull a show it? A dono whether a wull or not, nor a dono whether a hev it or not; but ef aal the receipts in Europe wur burnt, d—— my blood but a'll stick to my father-in-laa."

"Your father-in-law may be proud of you," said the colonel.

"By h——, a'll back you en that," said the fellow, nodding his head, and looking round him confidently. "By h——, a say that too!"

"And I'm sorry to be compelled to add," continued the colonel, "that you may be equally proud of your father-in-law."

"A say right agane! D—— me, bit a'll back that too!" and he nodded confidently, and looked around the room once more. "A wull—d—— my blood, bit no man can say agane

[1] A half-tumbler of punch.

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it. A'm married to his daughther; an', by the sun that shines, a'll still stan' up for my father-in-laa."

"Mr. Carson," said the colonel, "can you disprove these facts? Can you show that you did not expel M'Evoy from his farm, and put the husband of your illegitimate daughter into it?—that you did not receive his rent, decline giving him a receipt, and afterwards compel him to pay twice, because he could not produce the receipt which you withheld?"

"Gentlemen," said Carson, not directly replying to the colonel, "there is a base conspiracy got up against me; and I can perceive, moreover, that there is evidently some unaccountable intention on the part of Colonel B—— to insult my feelings and injure my character. When paltry circumstances that have occurred above ten years ago are raked up in my teeth, I have little to say but that it proves how very badly off the colonel must have been for an imputation against my conduct and discretion as his agent, since he finds himself compelled to hunt so far back for a charge."

"That is by no means the heaviest charge I have to bring against you," replied the colonel. "There is no lack of them; nor shall you be able to complain that they are not recent, as well as of longer standing. Your conduct in the case of poor honest M'Evoy here is black and iniquitous. He must be restored to his farm, but by other hands than yours, and that ruffian instantly expelled from it. From this moment, sir, you cease to be my agent. You have betrayed the confidence I reposed in you; you have misled me as to the character of my tenants; you have been a deceitful, cringing, cunning, selfish, and rapacious tyrant. My people you have ground to dust; my property you have lessened in value nearly one-half, and for your motives in doing this, I refer you to certain transactions and legal documents which passed between us. There is nothing cruel or mercenary which you did not practise in order to enrich yourself. The whole tenor of your conduct is before me. Your profligacy is not only discovered, but already proved; and you played those villainous pranks, I suppose, because I have been mostly an absentee. Do not think, however, that you shall enjoy the fruits of your extortion. I will place the circumstances

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and the proofs of the respective charges against you in the hands of my solicitor, and, by the sacred heaven above me, you shall disgorge the fruits of your rapacity! My good people, I shall remain among you for another fortnight, during which time I intend to go through my estate, and set everything to rights as well as I can, until I may appoint a humane and feeling gentleman as my agent—such a one as will have, at least, a character to lose. I also take this opportunity of informing you that in future I shall visit you often, will redress your grievances, should you have any to complain of, and will give such assistance to the honest and industrious among you—but to *them only*—as I trust may make us better pleased with each other than we have been. Do not you go, M'Evoy, until I speak to you."

During these observations Carson sat with a smile, or rather a sneer, upon his lips. It was the sneer of a purse-proud villain, confident that his wealth, no matter how ill-gotten, was still wealth, and worth its value.

"Colonel," said he, "I have heard all you said, but you see me 'so strong in honesty' that I am not moved. In the course of a few weeks I shall have purchased an estate of my own, which I will manage differently, for my fortune is made, sir. I intend also to give up my other agencies; I am rather old, and must retire to enjoy a little of the *otium cum dignitate*. I wish you all good morning!"

The colonel turned away in abhorrence, but disdained any reply.

"A say, Sam," said the Presbyterian, "bring your son-in-laa wuth you."

"An' a say that too," exclaimed the drunken ruffian—"a say that, a do. A'm married to his daughther; an' a say stull that, d——n my blood, bit a'll stick to my father-in-laa! That's the point!"—and again he nodded his head, and looked round him with a drunken swagger. "A'll stick to my father-in-laa! A'll do that—feth, a wull!"

It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader that the colonel's address to Carson soon got among the assembled tenantry, and a vehement volley of groans and hisses followed the discarded agent up the street.

"Ha! bad luck to you for an ould villain! You were

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made to hear on the deaf side o' your head at last! You may take the black wool out o' your ears now, you rip! The cries an' curses o' the widows an' orphans that you made and oppressed has ris up agin you at the long-run! Ha! you beggarly nager! maybe you'll make us neglect our own work to do yours agin! Go an' gather the dhry cow-cakes, you misert, an' bring them home in your pocket, to throw on the dunghill!"

"Do you remimber the day," said others, "you met Mr. M——, an' you goin' up the street wid a cake of it in your fists, undher your shabby skirts; an' whin the gintleman wint to shake hands wid you, how he discovered your maneness? Three groans for Yallow Sam, the extortioner! A short coorse to him! Your corner's warm below for you, you villain!"

"But now, boys, for the colonel!" they exclaimed. "Hurra for noble Colonel B——, the rale Irish gintleman, that wouldn't see his tenants put upon by a villain! Hurra! Hell resave yees, shout! Hurra! Hurra! Hurra! Hur——tundher-an-ounze, my voice is cracked! Where's his coach? —where's his honour's coach? Come, boys, out wid it!—out wid it! Tattheration to yees, come! We'll dhraw it to the divil, to hell an' back agin, if it plases him! Success to Colonel B——! Blood-an-turf! what'll we do for a fight? Long life to noble Colonel B——, the poor man's friend!—long life to him for ever, an' a day longer! Whoo! my darlins! Hurra!"

The warm interest which the colonel took in M'Evoy's behalf was looked upon by the other tenants as a guarantee of his sincerity in all he promised. Their enthusiasm knew no bounds. They got out his carriage from the inn-yard, and drew it through the town, though the colonel himself, beyond the fact of their shouting, remained quite ignorant of what was going forward.

After Carson's departure, the colonel's friends, having been first asked to dine with him at the inn, also took their leave, and none remained but M'Evoy, who waited with pleasing anxiety to hear what the colonel proposed to say—for he felt certain that it would be agreeable.

"M'Evoy," said the colonel, "I am truly sorry for what

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you have suffered through the villainy of my agent; but I will give you redress, and allow you for what you have lost by the transaction. It is true, as I have been lately told by a person who pleaded your cause nobly and eloquently, that I can never repay you for what you have suffered. However, what we can we will do. You are poor, I understand?"

"God He sees that, sir; and afflicted, too, plase your honour."

"Afflicted! How is that?"

"I had a son, sir—a blessed boy! a darlin' boy!—once our comfort, an' once we thought he'd be our pride an' our staff, but——"

The poor man's tears here flowed fast; he took up the skirt of his *cothamore,* or greatcoat, and after wiping his eyes, and clearing his voice, proceeded:—

"He was always, as I said, a blessed boy, and we looked up to him always, sir. He saw our poverty, your honour, an' he felt it, sir, keen enough, indeed, God help him! How-an'-ever, he took it on him to go up to Munster, sir, undher hopes of risin' us—undher the hopes, poor child—an' God knows, sir—if—oh, Jemmy, *avourneen machree!*—I doubt—I doubt you sunk undher what proved too many for you! I doubt my child's dead, sir—him that all our hearts wor fixed upon; and if that ud happen to be the case, nothin', sir—oh, nothin'—not even your kindness in doin' us justice, could make us happy. We would rather beg wid him, sir, nor have the best in the world widout him. His poor young heart, sir, was fixed upon the place your honour is restorin' us to; an' I'm afeard his mother, sir, would break her heart if she thought he couldn't share our good fortune! And we don't know whether he's livin' or dead! That, sir, is what's afflictin' us. I had some notion of goin' to look for him; but he tould us he would never write, or let us hear from him, till he'd be either one thing or other."

"I can tell you, for your satisfaction, that your son is well, M'Evoy. Believe me, he is well—I know it."

"Well! Before God, does your honour spake truth? Well! Oh, sir, for His sake that died for us, an' for the sake of His blessed mother, can you tell me is my darlin' son alive?"

"He is living; is in excellent health; is as well dressed as

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I am; and has friends as rich and capable of assisting him as myself. But how is this? What's the matter with you? You are pale! Good God! Here, waiter! Waiter! Waiter, I say!"

The colonel rang the bell violently, and two or three waiters entered at the same moment.

"Bring a little wine and water, one of you, and let the other two remove this man to the open window. Be quick! What do you stare at?"

In a few minutes the old man recovered, and untying the narrow coarse cravat which he wore, wiped the perspiration off his pale face.

"Pray don't be too much affected," said the colonel. "Waiter, bring up refreshment—bring wine—be quiet and calm—you are weak, poor fellow—but we will strengthen you by-and-by."

"I am wake, sir," he replied; "for, God help us! this was a hard year upon us, and we suffered what few could bear. But he's livin', colonel! Our darlin' is livin'! Oh, colonel, your kindness went to my heart this day afore; but that was nothin'—he's livin' an' well! On my two knees, before God, I thank you for them words! I thank you a thousand an' a thousand times more for them words nor for what your honour did about Yallow Sam."

"Get up," said the colonel—"get up. Your son is well, I assure you. Bring those things to this table, waiter."

"But can your honour tell me anything in particular about him, sir?—what he's doin'—or what he intends to do?"

"Yes! he is at a respectable boarding-school."

"Boordin'-school! But isn't boordin'-schools Protestant, sir?"

"Not all; he is at a Catholic boarding-school, and reading hard to be a priest, which, I hope, he will soon be. He has good friends, and you may thank him for being restored to your farm."

"Glory be to my Maker for that! Oh, sir, your tenants wor desaved in you! They thought, sir, that you wor a hard-hearted gintleman, that didn't care whether they lived or died."

"I feel that I neglected them too long, M'Evoy. Now take some refreshment—eat something, and afterwards drink

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a few glasses of wine. Your feelings have been much excited, and you will be the better for it. Keep up your spirits. I am going to ride, and must leave you; but if you call on me to-morrow, at one o'clock, I shall have more good news for you. We must stock your farm, and enable you to enter upon it creditably."

"Sir," said M'Evoy, "you are a Protestant; but, as I hope to enther glory, I an' my wife an' childher will pray that your bed may be made in heaven, this night, and that your honour may be led to see the thruth an' the right coorse."

The colonel then left him; and the simple man, on looking at the cold meat, bread, and wine before him, raised his hands and eyes towards heaven to thank God for His goodness, and to invoke a blessing upon his noble and munificent benefactor.

But how shall we describe the feelings of his family when, fter returning home, he related the occurrences of that day. The severe and pressing exigencies under which they laboured had prevented his sons from attending the investigation that was to take place in town. Their expectations, however, were raised, and they looked out with intense anxiety for the return of their father.

At length he was seen coming slowly up the hill; the spades were thrown aside, and the whole family assembled to hear "what was done."

The father entered in silence, sat down, and after wiping his brow, and laying down his hat, placing his staff across it, upon the floor, he drew his breath deeply.

"Dominick," said the wife, "what news? What was done?"

"Vara," replied Dominick, "do you remember the day—fair and handsome you wor then—when I first kissed your lips as my own darlin' wife?"

"Ah, *avourneen*, Dominick, don't spake of them times. The happiness we had then is long gone, *acushla*, in one sense."

"It's before me like yestherday, Vara—the delight that went through my heart—jist as clear as yestherday, or the blessed sun that's shinin' through the broken windy on the floor there. I remimber, Vara, saying to you that day—I

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don't know whether you remimber it or not—but I remimber sayin' to you, that if I lived a thousand years I could never feel sich happiness as I did when I first pressed you to my heart as my own wife."

"Well, but we want to hear what happened, Dominick, *achora.*"

"Do you remimber the words, Vara?"

"Och! I do, *avourneen.* Didn't they go into my heart at the time, an' how could I forget them? But I can't bear, somehow, to look back at what we wor then, bekase I feel my heart breakin', *acushla!*"

"Well, Vara, look at me. Amn't I a poor wasted crathur now, in comparishment to what I was thin?"

"God He sees the change that's in you, darlin'! But sure, 'twasn't your fau't or mine either, Dominick, *avillish!*"

"Well, Vara, you see me now—I'm happier—before God, I'm happier—happier a thousand degrees than I was thin! Come to my arms, *asthore machree*—my heart's breakin'—but it's wid happiness—don't be frightened—it's wid joy I'm sheddin' these tears—it's wid happiness an' delight I'm crying! Jemmy is livin' an' well, childher—he's livin' an' well, Vara—the star of our hearts is livin' an' well, an' happy! Kneel down, childher—kneel down! Bend before the great God, an' thank Him for His kindness to your blessed brother—to our blessed son. Bless the colonel, childher—bless him whin you're down, Protestant an' all as he is. Oh, bless him as if you prayed for myself, or for Jemmy that's far away from us!"

He paused for a few minutes, bent his head upon his hands as he knelt in supplication at the chair, then resumed his seat, as did the whole family, deeply affected.

"Now, childher," said he, "I'll tell yees all; but don't any of you be so poor a crathur as I was to-day. Bear it mild an' asy, Vara, *acushla,* for I know it will take a start out of you. Sure, we're to go back to our own ould farm! Ay, an' what's more—oh, God of heaven, bless him!—what's more, the colonel is to stock it for us, an' to help us; an' what is more, Yallow Sam is out! OUT!!"

"Out!" they exclaimed—"Jemmy well, an' Yallow Sam out! Oh, father, surely——"

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"Now behave, I say. Ay, and never to come in again! But who do you think got him out?"

"Who?—why, God He knows. Who could get him out?"

"Our son, Vara—our son, childher—Jemmy got him out, an' got ourselves back to our farm! I had it partly from the noble colonel's own lips, an' the remainder from Mr. M——y, that I met on my way home. But there's more to come: sure, Jemmy has friends aquil to the colonel himself; an' sure, he's at a Catholic boordin'-school, among gintlemen's childher, an' in a short time he'll be a priest in full ordhers."

We here draw a veil over the delight of the family. Questions upon questions, replies upon replies, sifting and cross-examinations, followed in rapid succession, until all was known that the worthy man had to communicate.

Another simple scene followed. When the joy of the family had somewhat subsided, the father, putting his hand in his coat-pocket, pulled out several large slices of mutton.

"Along wid all, childher," said he, "the colonel ordhered me my dinner. I ate plenty myself, an' slipped these slices in my pocket for yees; but the devil a one o' me knows what kind o' mate it is. An' I got wine, too! Oh!—well, they may talk, but wine is the dhrink! Bring me the ould knife, till I make a fair divide among yees. *Musha*, what kind o' mate can it be, for myself doesn't remimber atin' any sort, barrin' bacon, an' a bit o' beef of an odd time?"

They all ate with an experimental air of sagacity that was rather amusing. None, however, had ever tasted mutton before, and consequently the nature and quality of the meat remained on that occasion a profound secret to M'Evoy and his family.[1] It is true they supposed it to be mutton; but not one of them could pronounce it to be such from any positive knowledge of its peculiar flavour.

"Well," said Dominick, "it's no matther what the name of it is, in regard that it's good mate, anyway, for them that has enough of it."

With a fervent heart and streaming eyes did this virtuous family offer up their grateful prayers to that God whose laws

[1] There are hundreds of thousands—yes, millions—of the poorer classes in Ireland who have never tasted mutton!

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they had not knowingly violated, and to whose providence they owed so much. Nor was their benefactor forgotten. The strength and energy of the Irish language, being that in which the peasantry usually pray, were well adapted to express the depth of their gratitude towards a man who had, as they said, "humbled himself to look into their wants, as if he was like one of themselves!"

For upwards of ten years they had not gone to bed free from the heaviness of care or the wasting grasp of poverty. Now their hearth was once more surrounded by peace and contentment, their burdens were removed, their pulses beat freely, and the language of happiness again was heard under their humble roof. Even sleep could not repress the vivacity of their enjoyments: they dreamt of their brother—for in the Irish heart the domestic affections hold the first place—they dreamt of the farm to which those affections had so long yearned. They trod it again as its legitimate possessors. Its fields were brighter, its corn waved with softer murmurs to the breeze, its harvests were richer, and the song of their harvest-home more cheerful than before. Their delight was tumultuous, but intense; and when they arose in the morning to

"A sober certainty of waking bliss,"

they again knelt in worship to God with exulting hearts, and again offered up their sincere prayers in behalf of the just man who had asserted their rights against the oppressor.

Colonel B—— was a man who, without having been aware of it, possessed an excellent capacity for business. The neglect of his property resulted not from want of feeling, but merely from want of consideration. There had, moreover, been no precedent for him to follow. He had seen no Irishman of rank ever bestow a moment's attention on his tenantry. They had been, for the most part, absentees like himself, and felt satisfied if they succeeded in receiving their half-yearly remittance in due course, without ever reflecting for a moment upon the situation of those from whom it was drawn.

Nay, what was more—he had not seen even the resident gentry enter into the state and circumstances of those who

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lived upon their property. It was a mere accident that determined him to become acquainted with his tenants; but no sooner had he seen his duty, and come to the resolution of performing it, than the decision of his character became apparent. It is true that within the last few years the Irish landlords have advanced in knowledge. Many of them have introduced more improved systems of agriculture, and instructed their tenants in the best methods of applying them; but during the time of which we write, an Irish landlord only saw his tenants when canvassing them for their votes, and instructing them in dishonesty and perjury, not reflecting that he was then teaching them to practise the arts of dissimulation and fraud against himself. This was the late system: let us hope that it will be superseded by a better one; and that a landlord will think it a duty, but neither a trouble nor a condeseension, to look into his own affairs, and keep an eye upon his tenantry.

The colonel, as he had said, remained more than a fortnight upon his estate; and, as he often declared since, the recollections arising from the good which he performed during that brief period rendered it the portion of his past life upon which he could look with most satisfaction. He did not leave the country till he saw M'Evoy and his family restored to their farm, and once more independent—until he had redressed every well-founded complaint, secured the affections of those who had before detested him, and diffused peace and comfort amongst every family upon his estate. From thenceforth he watched the interests of his tenants, and soon found that in promoting their welfare, and instructing them in their duties, he was more his own benefactor than theirs. Before many years had elapsed, his property was wonderfully improved; he himself was called the "Lucky Landlord," "bekase," said the people, "ever since he spoke to an' advised his tenants, we find that it's lucky to live undher him. The people has heart to work wid a gintleman that won't grind thim; an' so sign's on it, every one thrives upon his land; an' dang my bones, but I believe a rotten stick ud grow on it, set in case it was thried."

In sooth, his popularity became proverbial; but it is probable that not even his justice and humanity contributed so

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much to this as the vigour with which he prosecuted his suit against "Yellow Sam," whom he compelled literally to "disgorge" the fruits of his heartless extortions.[1]

Colonel B——, immediately after his return home, sent for Mr. O'Brien, who waited on him with a greater degree of curiosity than perhaps he had ever felt before. The colonel smiled as he extended his hand to him.

"Mr. O'Brien," said he, "I knew you would feel anxious to hear the result of my visit to the estate which this man with the nickname managed for me."

"Managed, sir! Did you say managed?"

"I spoke in the past tense, Mr. O'Brien: he is out."

"Then your protégé's story was correct, sir?"

"To a tittle. Mr. O'Brien, there is something extraordinary in that boy; otherwise how could it happen that a sickly, miserable-looking creature, absolutely in tatters, could have impressed us both so strongly with a sense of the injustice done ten years ago to his father? It is, indeed, remarkable."

"The boy, colonel, deeply felt that act of injustice, and the expression of it came home to the heart."

"I have restored his father, however. The poor man and his family are once more happy. I have stocked their old farm for them; in fact, they now enjoy comfort and independence."

"I am glad, sir, that you have done them justice. That act alone will go far to redeem your character from the odium which the conduct of your agent was calculated to throw upon it."

"There is not, probably, in Ireland a landlord so popular as I am at this moment among my tenants. Restoring

[1] This worthy agent died soon after his disgrace, without any legitimate issue, and his property, which amounted to about fifty thousand pounds, was inherited by a gentleman of the strictest honour and integrity. To this day his memory is detested by the people, who, with that bitterness by which they stigmatise a villain, have erected him into a standard of dishonesty. If a man become remarkable for want of principle, they usually say, "He's as great a rogue as Yellow Sam," or, "He is the greatest sconce that ever was in the country, barrin' Yellow Sam."

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M'Evoy, however, is but a small part of what I have done. Carson's pranks were incredible. He was a rack-renter of the first water. A person named Brady had paid him twenty-five guineas as a bribe for renewing a lease for him; yet, after having received the money, he kept the poor man dangling after him, and at length told him that he was offered a larger sum by another. In some cases he kept back the receipts, and made the poor people pay twice. Then, sir, he would not take bank-notes in payment. No; he was so wonderfully conscientious and so zealously punctual in fulfilling my wishes, as he told them, on the subject, that nothing would pass in payment but gold. This gold, sir, they were compelled to receive from himself at a most oppressive premium—so that he actually fleeced them, under my name, in every conceivable manner and form of villainy. He is a usurer too, and, I am told, worth forty or fifty thousand pounds; but, thank Heaven! he is no longer an agent of mine. But now about our protégé? How is he doing?"

"Extremely well. I have had a letter from him a few days ago, in which he alludes to the interest you have taken in himself and his family, with a depth of feeling truly affecting."

"When you write to him, let him know that I have placed his father in his old farm, and that Carson is out. Say I am sure he will conduct himself properly, in which case I charge myself with his expenses until he shall have accomplished his purpose. After that he may work his own way through life, and I have no doubt but he will do it well and honourably."

Colonel B——'s pledge on this occasion was nobly redeemed. Our humble hero pursued his studies with zeal and success. In due time he entered Maynooth, where he distinguished himself not simply for smartness as a student, but as a young man possessed of a mind far above the common order. During all this time nothing occurred worthy of particular remark, except that, in fulfilment of his former vow, he never wrote to any of his friends; for the reader should have been told that this was originally comprehended in the determination he had formed. He received ordination at the hands of

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his friend the bishop whom we have already introduced to the reader, and on the same day he was appointed by that gentleman to a curacy in his own parish. The colonel, whose regard for him never cooled, presented him with fifty pounds, together with a horse, saddle, and bridle; so that he found himself in a capacity to enter upon his duties in a decent and becoming manner. Another circumstance that added considerably to his satisfaction was the appointment of Mr. O'Brien to a parish adjoining that of the bishop. Jemmy's afflictions had been the means of bringing the merits of that excellent man before his spiritual superior, who became much attached to him, and availed himself of the earliest opportunity of rewarding his unobtrusive piety and benevolence.

No sooner was his ordination completed than the long-suppressed yearnings after his home and kindred came upon his spirit with a power that could not be restrained. He took leave of his friends with a beating heart, and set out on a delightful summer morning to revisit all that had been, notwithstanding his long absence and severe trials, so strongly wrought into his memory and affections. Our readers may therefore suppose him on his journey home, and permit themselves to be led in imagination to the house of his former friend Lanigan, where we must lay the scene for the present.

Lanigan's residence has the same comfortable and warm appearance which always distinguishes the habitation of the independent and virtuous man. What, however, can the stir, and bustle, and agitation which prevail in it mean? The daughters run out to a little mound, or natural terrace, beside the house, and look anxiously towards the road; then return, and almost immediately appear again, with the same intense anxiety to catch a glimpse of some one whom they expect. They look keenly; but why is it that their disappointment appears to be attended with such dismay? They go into their father's house once more, wringing their hands, and betraying all the symptoms of affliction. Here is their mother, too, coming to peer into the distance; she is rocking with that motion peculiar to Irishwomen when suffering distress. She places her open hand upon her brows that she may collect her sight to a particular spot; she is

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blinded by her tears, breaks out into a low wail, and returns with something like the darkness of despair on her countenance. She goes into the house, passes through the kitchen, and enters into a bedroom, seats herself on a chair beside the bed, and renews her low but bitter wail of sorrow. Her husband is lying in that state which the peasantry know usually precedes the agonies of death.

"For the sake of the livin' God," said he, on seeing her, "is there any sign o' them?"

"Not yet, *a suillish;* but they will soon—they must soon, *asthore*, be here, an' thin your mind will be asy."

"Oh, Alley, Alley, if you could know what I suffer for fraid I'd die widout the priest, you'd pity me!"

"I do pity you, *asthore;* but don't be cast down, for I have my trust in God that He won't desart you in your last hour. You did what you could, my heart's pride; you bent before Him night an' mornin', and sure the poor neighbour never wint from your door widout lavin' his blessin' behind him."

The dying man raised his hands feebly from the bedclothes. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I thought I did a great dale, Alley; but now—but now—it appears nothin' to what I ought to a' done when I could. Still, *avourneen*, my life's not unpleasant when I look back at it; for I can't remimber that I ever purposely offinded a livin' mortal. All I want to satisfy me is the priest."

"No, *avourneen*, you did not; for it wasn't in you to offind a child."

"Alley, you'll pardon me an' forgive me, *acushla*, if ever—if ever I did what was displasin' to you! An' call in the childher, till I see them about me—I want to have their forgiveness, too. I know I'll have it—for they wor good childher, an' ever loved me."

The daughters now entered the room, exclaiming, "*Ahir dheelish*, Pether is comin' by himself, but no priest! Blessed Queen of Heaven, what will we do! Oh! father darlin', are you to die widout the Holy Ointment?"

The sick man clasped his hands, looked towards heaven, and groaned aloud.

"Oh, it's hard, this," said he—"it's hard upon me! Yet

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I won't be cast down. I'll trust in the good God; I'll trust in His blessed name!"

His wife, on hearing that her son was returned without the priest, sat with her face shrouded by her apron, weeping in grief that none but they who know the dependence which those belonging to her Church place in its last rites can comprehend. The children appeared almost distracted; their grief had more of that stunning character which attends unexpected calamity than of sorrow for one who is gradually drawn from life.

At length the messenger entered the room, and, almost choked with tears, stated that both priests were absent that day at Conference, and would not return till late.

The hitherto-moderated grief of the wife arose to a pitch much wilder than the death of her husband could, under ordinary circumstances, occasion. To die without absolution —to pass away into eternity "unanointed, unanealed"— without being purified from the inherent stains of humanity —was to her a much deeper affliction than her final separation from him. She cried in tones of the most piercing despair, and clapped her hands, as they do who weep over the dead. Had he died in the calm confidence of having received the *Viaticum*, or Sacrament, before death, his decease would have had nothing remarkably calamitous in it, beyond usual occurrences of a similar nature. Now the grief was intensely bitter in consequence of his expected departure without the priest. His sons and daughters felt it as forcibly as his wife; their lamentations were full of the strongest and sharpest agony.

For nearly three hours did they remain in this situation; poor Lanigan sinking by degrees into that collapsed state from which there is no possibility of rallying. He was merely able to speak, and recognise his family; but every moment advanced him, with awful certainty, nearer and nearer to his end.

A great number of the neighbours were now assembled, all participating in the awful feeling which predominated, and anxious to compensate by their prayers for the absence of that confidence derived by Roman Catholics, during the approach of death, from the spiritual aid of the priest.

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They were all at prayer; the sick-room and kitchen were crowded with his friends and acquaintances, many of whom knelt out before the door, and joined with loud voices in the Rosary which was offered up in his behalf.

In this crisis were they, when a horseman, dressed in black, approached the house. Every head was instantly turned round, with a hope that it might be the parish priest or his curate; but, alas! they were doomed to experience a fresh disappointment. The stranger, though clerical enough in his appearance, presented a countenance with which none of them was acquainted. On glancing at the group who knelt around the door, he appeared to understand the melancholy cause which brought them together.

"How is this?" he exclaimed. "Is there any one here sick or dying?"

"Poor Misther Lanigan, sir, is jist departin', glory be to God! An' what is terrible all out upon himself and family, he's dyin' widout the priest. They're both at Conwhirence, sir, an' can't come—Mr. Dogherty an' his curate."

"Make way!" said the stranger, throwing himself off his horse, and passing quickly through the people. "Show me to the sick man's room—be quick, my friends—I am a priest."

In a moment a passage was cleared, and the stranger found himself beside the bed of death. Grief in the room was loud and bitter; but his presence stilled it, despite of what they felt.

"My dear friends," said he, "you know there should be silence in the apartment of a dying man. For shame!—for shame! Cease this clamour; it will but distract him for whom you weep, and prevent him from composing his mind for the great trial that is before him."

"Sir," said Lanigan's wife, seizing his hand in both hers, and looking distractedly in his face, "are you a priest? For heaven's sake tell us!"

"I am," he replied; "leave the room every one of you. I hope your husband is not speechless?"

"Sweet Queen of Heaven, not yet, may her name be praised! but near it, your reverence—widin little or no time of it."

Whilst they spoke, he was engaged in putting the stole

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about his neck, after which he cleared the room, and commenced hearing Lanigan's confession.

The appearance of a priest, and the consolation it produced, rallied the powers of life in the benevolent farmer. He became more collected; made a clear and satisfactory confession; received the sacrament of extreme unction; and felt himself able to speak with tolerable distinctness and precision. The effects of all this were astonishing. A placid serenity, full of hope and confidence, beamed from the pale and worn features of him who was but a few minutes before in a state of terror altogether indescribable. When his wife and family, after having been called in, observed this change, they immediately participated in his tranquillity. Death had been deprived of its sting, and grief of its bitterness. Their sorrow was still deep, but it was not darkened by the dread of future misery. They felt for him as a beloved father, a kind husband, and a dear friend, who had lived a virtuous life, feared God, and was now about to pass into happiness.

When the rites of the Church were administered, and the family again assembled around the bed, the priest sat down in a position which enabled him to see the features of this good man more distinctly.

"I would be glad," said Lanigan, "to know who it is that God in His goodness has sent to smooth my bed in death, if it ud be plasin', sir, to you to tell me?"

"Do you remember," replied the priest, "a young lad whom you met some years ago on his way to Munster as a poor scholar? You and your family were particularly kind to him; so kind that he has never since forgotten your affectionate hospitality."

"We do, your reverence, we do. A mild, gentle crathur he was, poor boy. I hope God prospered him."

"You see him now before you," said the priest. "I am that boy, and I thank God that I can testify, however slightly, my deep sense of the virtues which you exercised towards me; although I regret that the occasion is one of such affliction."

The farmer raised his eyes and feeble hands towards heaven. "Praise an' glory to your name, good God!" he exclaimed—"praise an' glory to your holy name! Now I

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know that I'm not forgotten, when you brought back the little kindness I did that boy for your sake, wid so many blessins to me in the hour of my affliction an' sufferin'! Childher, remimber this, now that I'm goin' to lave yees for ever! Remimber always to help the stranger, an' thim that's poor an' in sorrow. If you do, God won't forget it to you, but will bring it back to yees when you stand in need of it, as He has done to me this day. You see, childher dear, how small trifles o' that kind depend on one another. If I hadn't thought of helpin' his reverence here, when he was young an' away from his own, he wouldn't think of callin' upon us this day as he was passin'. You see the hand of God is in it, childher; which it is, indeed, in everything that passes about us, if we could only see it as we ought to do. Thin, but I'd like to look upon your face, sir, if it's plasin' to you? A little more to the light, sir. There—I now see you. Ay, indeed, it's changed for the betther, it is—the same mild, clear countenance; but not sorrowful, as when I seen it last. Suffer me to put my hand on your head, sir; I'd like to bless you before I die, for I can't forget what you undhertook to do for your paarents."

The priest sat near him; but finding that he was scarcely able to raise his hand to his head, he knelt down, and the farmer, before he communicated the blessing, inquired—

"*Musha*, sir, may I ax, wor you able to do anything to help your family as you expected?"

"God," said the priest, "made me the instrument of raising them from their poverty; they are now comfortable and happy."

"Ay! Well I knew at the time, an' I said it, that a blessin' would attind your endayvours. An' now resave my blessin'. May you never depart from the right way! May the blessin' of God rest upon you for ever—Amin! Childher, I'm gettin' wake; come near me, till—till I bless you, too, for the last time! They wor good childher, sir—they were ever an' always good to me an' to their poor mother, your reverence; an'—God forgive me if it's a sin!—but I feel a great dale o' my heart an' my love fixed upon them. But sure, I'm their father, an' God, I hope, will look over it! Now, darlins, afore I bless yees, I ax your forgiveness if ever I was harsher to yees than I ought!"

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The children with a simultaneous movement encircled his bed, and could not reply for some minutes.

"Never, father darlin'! Oh, never did you offind us! Don't speak in that way, or you'll break our hearts; but forgive us, father *asthore!* Oh, forgive an' bless us, an' don't remimber against us our folly an' disobedience, for it's only now that we see we warn't towards you as we ought to be! Forgive us an' pardon us!"

He then made them all kneel around his bed, and with solemn words and an impressive manner, placed his hand upon their heads, and blessed them with a virtuous father's last blessing.

He then called for his wife, and the scene became more touching, and more elevated. There was an exultation in her manner, and an expression of vivid hope in her eye, arising from the fact of her husband having received, and been soothed by, the rites of her Church, that gave evident proof of the unparalleled attachment borne by persons of her class to the Catholic religion. The arrival of our hero had been so unexpected, and the terrors of the tender wife for her husband's soul so great, that the administration of the sacrament almost superseded from her heart every other sensation than that of devotional triumph. Even now, in the midst of her tears, that triumph kindled in her eye, with a light that shone in melancholy beauty upon the bed of death. In proportion, however, as the parting scene —which was to be their last—began to work with greater power upon her sorrow, so did this expression gradually fade away. Grief for his loss resumed its dominion over her heart so strongly that their last parting was afflicting even to look upon.

When it was over, Lanigan once more addressed the priest.

"Now, sir," he observed, but with great difficulty, "let me have your blessin' an' your prayers; an' along wid that, your reverence, if you remimber a request I once made to you——"

"I remember it well," replied the priest: "you allude to the masses which you wished me to say for you, should I ever receive Orders. Make your mind easy on that point. I not only shall offer up mass for the repose of your soul, but I

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can assure you that I have mentioned you by name in every mass which I celebrated since my ordination."

He then proceeded to direct the mind of his dying benefactor to such subjects as were best calculated to comfort and strengthen him.

About daybreak the next morning this man of many virtues, after struggling rather severely for two hours preceding his death, passed into eternity, there to enjoy the recompense of a well-spent life.

When he was dead, the priest, who never left him during the night, approached the bed, and after surveying his benevolent features, now composed in the stillness of death, exclaimed—

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them!"

Having uttered these words aloud, he sat down beside the bed, buried his face in his handkerchief, and wept.

He was now only a short day's journey from home, and as his presence, he knew, would be rather a restraint upon a family so much in affliction, he bade them farewell, and proceeded on his way. He travelled slowly, and as every well-known hill or lake appeared to him, his heart beat quickly, his memory gave up its early stores, and his affections prepared themselves for the trial that was before them.

"It is better for me not to arrive," thought he, "until the family shall have returned from their daily labour and are collected about the hearth."

In the meantime, many an impression of profound and fervid piety came over him when he reflected upon the incontrovertible proofs of providential protection and interference which had been, during his absence from home, under his struggles, and in his good fortune, so clearly laid before him. "Deep," he exclaimed, "is the gratitude I owe to God for this; may I never forget to acknowledge it!"

It was now about seven o'clock; the evening was calm, and the sun shone with that clear amber light which gives warmth and the power of exciting tenderness to natural scenery. He had already gained the ascent which commanded a view of the rich sweep of country that reposed below. There it lay—his native home—his native parish—bathed in the light and glory of the hour. Its fields were

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green, its rivers shining like loosened silver, its meadows already studded with haycocks, its green pastures covered with sheep, and its unruffled lakes reflecting the hills under which they lay. Here and there a gentleman's residence rose among the distant trees, and well did he recognise the church spire that cut into the western sky on his right. It is true, nothing of the grandeur and magnificence of nature was there: everything was simple in its beauty. The quiet charm, the serene light, the air of happiness and peace that reposed upon all he saw, stirred up a thousand tender feelings in a heart whose gentle character resembled that of the prospect which it felt so exquisitely. The smoke of a few farm-houses and cottages rose in blue, graceful columns to the air, giving just that appearance of life which was necessary; and a figure or two, with lengthened shadows, moved across the fields and meadows a little below where he stood.

But our readers need not to be told that there was one spot which, beyond all others, riveted his attention. On that spot his eager eye rested long and intensely. The spell of its remembrance had clung to his early heart: he had never seen it in his dreams without weeping; and often had the agitation of his imaginary sorrow awoke him with his eyelashes steeped in tears. He looked down on it steadily. At length he was moved with a strong sensation like grief: he sobbed twice or thrice, and the tears rolled in showers from his eyes. His gathering affections were relieved by this: he felt lighter, and in the same slow manner rode onward to his father's house.

To this there were two modes of access: one by a paved bridleway, or *boreen*, that ran up directly before the door; the other by a green lane that diverged from the *boreen* about a furlong below the house. He took the latter, certain that the family could not notice his approach, nor hear the noise of his horse's footsteps, until he could arrive at the very threshold. On dismounting, he felt that he could scarcely walk. He approached the door, however, as steadily as he could. He entered; and the family, who had just finished their supper, rose up, as a mark of their respect to the stranger.

"Is this," he inquired, "the house in which Dominick M'Evoy lives?"

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"That's my name, sir," replied Dominick.

"The family, I trust, are—all—well? I have been desired—but no—no—I cannot—I cannot!—FATHER!—MOTHER!"

"It's him!" shrieked the mother—"it's himself!—Jemmy!"

"Jemmy!—Jemmy!" shouted the father, with a cry of joy which might be heard far beyond the house.

"Jemmy!—our poor Jemmy!" exclaimed his brothers and sisters.

"Asy, childher," said the father—"asy; let the mother to him—let her to him. Who has the right that she has? Vara, *asthore*—Vara, think of yourself. God of heaven! what is comin' over her?—Her brain's turned!"

"Father, don't remove her," said the son. "Leave her arms where they are; it's long since they encircled my neck before. Often—often would I have given the wealth of the universe to be encircled in my blessed and beloved mother's arms! Yes, yes! Weep, father—weep, each of you. You see these tears; consider them as a proof that I have never forgotten you! Beloved mother! recollect yourself. She knows me not—her eyes wander! I fear the shock has been too much for her. Place a chair at the door, and I will bring her to the air."

After considerable effort the mother's faculties were restored so far as to be merely conscious that our hero was her son. She had not yet shed a tear; but now she surveyed his countenance, smiled, and named him; placed her hands upon him and examined his dress with a singular blending of conflicting emotions, but still without being thoroughly collected.

"I will speak to her," said Jemmy, "in Irish; it will go directly to her heart. *Mhair, avourneen, tha ma, laht, anish!*—Mother, my darling, I am with you at last."

"*Shamus, aroon, avick machree, wuil thu lhum?—wuil thu—wuil thu lhum?*—Jemmy, my beloved, son of my heart, are you with me?—are you—are you with me?"

"*Ish maheen a tha in, a vair dheelish machree!*—It is *I* who am with you, beloved mother of my heart!"

She smiled again, but only for a moment. She looked at him, laid his head upon her bosom, bedewed his face with

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her tears, and muttered out, in a kind of sweet, musical cadence, the Irish cry of joy.

We are incapable of describing this scene further. Our readers must be contented to know that the delight and happiness of our hero's whole family were complete. Their son, after many years of toil and struggle, had at length succeeded, by a virtuous course of action, in raising them from poverty to comfort, and in effecting his own object, which was to become a member of the Catholic priesthood. During all his trials he never failed to rely on God; and it is seldom that those who rely upon Him, when striving to attain a laudable purpose, are ever ultimately disappointed.

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We regret to inform our readers that the poor scholar is dead! He did not, in fact, long survive the accomplishment of his wishes. But as we had the particulars of his story from his nearest friends, we thought his virtues of too exalted a nature to pass into oblivion without some record, however humble. He died as he had lived—the friend of God and of man.

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WILDGOOSE LODGE

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I HAD read the anonymous summons, but, from its general import, I believed it to be one of those special meetings convened for some purpose affecting the usual objects and proceedings of the body; at least, the terms in which it was conveyed to me had nothing extraordinary or mysterious in them beyond the simple fact that it was not to be a general but a select meeting. This mark of confidence flattered me, and I determined to attend punctually. I was, it is true, desired to keep the circumstance entirely to myself; but there was nothing startling in this, for I had often received summonses of a similar nature. I therefore resolved to attend, according to the letter of my instructions, "on the next night, at the solemn hour of midnight, to deliberate and act upon such matters as should then and there be submitted to my consideration." The morning after I received this message I arose and resumed my usual occupations; but from whatever cause it may have proceeded, I felt a sense of approaching evil hang heavily upon me. The beats of my pulse were languid, and an undefinable feeling of anxiety pervaded my whole spirit; even my face was pale, and my eye so heavy that my father and brothers concluded me to be ill; an opinion which I thought at the time to be correct, for I felt exactly that kind of depression which precedes a severe fever. I could not understand what I experienced; nor can I yet, except by supposing that there is in human nature some mysterious faculty by which, in coming calamities, the dread of some fearful evil is anticipated, and that it is possible to catch a dark presentiment of the sensations which they subsequently produce. For my part, I can neither analyse nor define it; but on that day I knew it by painful experience, and so have a thousand others in similar circumstances.

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It was about the middle of winter. The day was gloomy and tempestuous almost beyond any other I remember: dark clouds rolled over the hills about me, and a close, sleet-like rain fell in slanting drifts that chased each other rapidly towards the earth on the course of the blast. The outlying cattle sought the closest and calmest corners of the fields for shelter; the trees and young groves were tossed about, for the wind was so unusually high that it swept in hollow gusts through them with that hoarse murmur which deepens so powerfully on the mind the sense of dreariness and desolation.

As the shades of night fell, the storm, if possible, increased. The moon was half gone, and only a few stars were visible by glimpses, as a rush of wind left a temporary opening in the sky. I had determined, if the storm should not abate, to incur any penalty rather than attend the meeting; but the appointed hour was distant, and I resolved to be decided by the future state of the night.

Ten o'clock came, but still there was no change; eleven passed, and on opening the door to observe if there were any likelihood of its clearing up, a blast of wind, mingled with rain, nearly blew me off my feet. At length it was approaching to the hour of midnight; and on examining a third time, I found it had calmed a little, and no longer rained.

I instantly got my oak stick, muffled myself in my great-coat, strapped my hat about my ears, and as the place of meeting was only a quarter of a mile distant, I presently set out.

The appearance of the heavens was lowering and angry, particularly in that point where the light of the moon fell against the clouds from a seeming chasm in them, through which alone she was visible. The edges of this chasm were faintly bronzed, but the dense body of the masses that hung piled on each side of her was black and impenetrable to sight. In no other point of the heavens was there any part of the sky visible—a deep veil of clouds overhung the horizon—yet was the light sufficient to give occasional glimpses of the rapid shifting which took place in this dark canopy, and of the tempestuous agitation with which the midnight storm swept to and fro beneath it.

At length I arrived at a long slated house situated in a

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solitary part of the neighbourhood; a little below it ran a small stream, which was now swollen above its banks, and rushing with mimic roar over the flat meadows beside it. The appearance of the bare slated building in such a night was particularly sombre; and to those, like me, who knew the purpose to which it was usually devoted, it was, or ought to have been, peculiarly so. There it stood, silent and gloomy, without any appearance of human life or enjoyment about or within it. As I approached, the moon once more had broken out of the clouds, and shone dimly upon the wet, glittering slates and windows with a death-like lustre, that gradually faded away as I left the point of observation and entered the folding-door. It was the parish chapel.

The scene which presented itself here was in keeping not only with the external appearance of the house, but with the darkness, the storm, and the hour, which was now a little after midnight. About eighty persons were sitting in dead silence upon the circular steps of the altar. They did not seem to move; and as I entered and advanced, the echo of my footsteps rang through the building with a lonely distinctness, which added to the solemnity and mystery of the circumstances about me. The windows were secured with shutters on the inside; and on the altar a candle was lighted, which burned dimly amid the surrounding darkness, and lengthened the shadow of the altar itself, and those of six or seven persons who stood on its upper steps, until they mingled in the obscurity which shrouded the lower end of the chapel. The faces of the men who sat on the altar-steps were not distinctly visible, yet their prominent and more characteristic features were in sufficient relief, and I observed that some of the most malignant and reckless spirits in the parish were assembled. In the eyes of those who stood at the altar, and whom I knew to be invested with authority over the others, I could perceive gleams of some latent and ferocious purpose, kindled, as I soon observed, into a fiercer expression of vengeance by the additional excitement of ardent spirits, with which they had stimulated themselves to a point of determination that mocked at the apprehension of all future responsibility, either in this world or the next.

The welcome which I received on joining them was far dif-

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ferent from the boisterous good-humour that used to mark our greetings on other occasions: just a nod of the head from this or that person, on the part of those who sat, with a *ghud dhemur tha thu?* in a suppressed voice, even below a common whisper; but from the standing group, who were evidently the projectors of the enterprise, I received a convulsive grasp of the hand, accompanied by a fierce and desperate look, that seemed to search my eye and countenance, to try if I were a person not likely to shrink from whatever they had resolved to execute. It is surprising to think of the powerful expression which a moment of intense interest or great danger is capable of giving to the eye, the features, and the slightest actions, especially in those whose station in society does not require them to constrain nature, by the force of social courtesies, into habits that conceal their natural emotions. None of the standing group spoke; but as each of them wrung my hand in silence, his eye was fixed on mine with an expression of drunken confidence and secrecy, and an insolent determination not to be gainsaid without peril. If looks could be translated with certainty, they seemed to say, "We are bound upon a project of vengeance, and if you do not join us, remember that we can revenge." Along with this grasp they did not forget to remind me of the common bond by which we were united, for each man gave me the secret grip of Ribbonism in a manner that made the joints of my fingers ache for some minutes afterwards.

There was one present, however—the highest in authority—whose actions and demeanour were calm and unexcited. He seemed to labour under no unusual influence whatever, but evinced a serenity so placid and philosophical that I attributed the silence of the sitting group, and the restraint which curbed in the outbreaking passions of those who stood, entirely to his presence. He was a schoolmaster, who taught his daily school in that chapel, and acted also, on Sunday, in the capacity of clerk to the priest—an excellent and amiable old man, who knew little of his illegal connections and atrocious conduct.

When the ceremonies of brotherly recognition and friendship were past, the captain (by which title I shall designate the last-mentioned person) stooped, and raising a jar of whisky

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on the corner of the altar, held a wine-glass to its neck, which he filled, and, with a calm nod, handed it to me to drink. I shrunk back, with an instinctive horror at the profaneness of such an act, in the house, and on the altar, of God, and peremptorily refused to taste the proffered draught. He smiled mildly at what he considered my superstition, and added quietly, and in a low voice, "You'll be wantin' it, I'm thinkin', afther the wettin' you got."

"Wet or dry," said I——

"Stop, man!" he replied, in the same tone; "spake low. But why wouldn't you take the whisky? Sure, there's as holy people to the fore as you; didn't they all take it? An' I wish we may never do worse nor dhrink a harmless glass o' whisky to keep the cowld out, anyway."

"Well," said I, "I'll jist trust to God and the consequences for the cowld, Paddy, *ma bouchal;* but a blessed dhrop of it won't be crossin' my lips, *avick;* so no more *gosther* about it —dhrink it yourself, if you like. Maybe you want it as much as I do; wherein I've the patthern of a good big coat upon me—so thick, your sowl, that if it was rainin' bullocks, a dhrop wouldn't get under the nap of it."

He gave a calm but keen glance at me as I spoke.

"Well, Jim," said he, "it's a good comrade you've got for the weather that's in it; but, in the manetime, to set you a dacent patthern, I'll just take this myself;" saying which, with the jar still upon its side, and the forefinger of his left hand in its neck, he swallowed the spirits. "It's the first I dhrank to-night," he added; "nor would I dhrink it now, only to show you that I've heart an' spirit to do the thing that we're all bound an' sworn to, when the proper time comes;" after which he laid down the glass, and turned up the jar, with much coolness, upon the altar.

During our conversation those who had been summoned to this mysterious meeting were pouring in fast; and as each person approached the altar he received from one to two or three glasses of whisky, according as he chose to limit himself; but, to do them justice, there were not a few of those present who, in spite of their own desire, and the captain's express invitation, refused to taste it in the house of God's worship. Such, however, as were scrupulous he afterwards

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recommended to take it on the outside of the chapel door, which they did, as by that means the sacrilege of the act was supposed to be evaded.

About one o'clock they were all assembled except six; at least, so the captain asserted, on looking at a written paper.

"Now, boys," said he, in the same low voice, "we are all present except the thraitors whose names I am goin' to read to you; not that we are to count thim thraitors till we know whether or not it was in their power to come. Anyhow, the night's terrible; but, boys, you're to know that neither fire nor wather is to prevint yees when duly summoned to attind a meeting—particularly whin the summons is widout a name, as you have been told that there is always something of consequence to be done thin."

He then read out the names of those who were absent, in order that the real cause of their absence might be ascertained, declaring that they would be dealt with accordingly. After this, with his usual caution, he shut and bolted the door, and having put the key in his pocket, ascended the steps of the altar, and for some time traversed the little platform from which the priest usually addresses the congregation.

Until this night I had never contemplated the man's countenance with any particular interest; but as he walked the platform I had an opportunity of observing him more closely. He was slight in person, apparently not thirty, and, on a first view, appeared to have nothing remarkable in his dress or features. I, however, was not the only person whose eyes were fixed upon him at that moment; in fact, every one present observed him with equal interest, for hitherto he had kept the object of the meeting perfectly secret, and of course we all felt anxious to know it. It was while he traversed the platform that I scrutinised his features with a hope, if possible, to glean from them some evidence of what was passing within him. I could, however, mark but little, and that little was at first rather from the intelligence which seemed to subsist between him and those whom I have already mentioned as standing against the altar, than from any indication of his own. Their gleaming eyes were fixed upon him with an intensity of savage and demon-like hope which blazed out in flashes of malignant triumph, as, upon turning,

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he threw a cool but rapid glance at them, to intimate the progress he was making in the subject to which he devoted the undivided energies of his mind. But in the course of his meditation I could observe, on one or two occasions, a dark shade come over his countenance that contracted his brow into a deep furrow, and it was then, for the first time, that I saw the Satanic expression of which his face, by a very slight motion of its muscles, was capable. His hands, during this silence, closed and opened convulsively; his eyes shot out two or three baleful glances, first to his confederates, and afterwards vacantly into the deep gloom of the lower part of the chapel; his teeth ground against each other like those of a man whose revenge burns to reach a distant enemy; and finally, after having wound himself up to a certain determination, his features relapsed into their original calm and undisturbed expression.

At this moment a loud laugh, having something supernatural in it, rang out wildly from the darkness of the chapel: he stopped, and putting his open hand over his brows, peered down into the gloom, and said calmly, in Irish, "*Bee dhu husth; ha nihl anam inh*—Hold your tongue; it is not yet the time."

Every eye was now directed to the same spot, but in consequence of its distance from the dim light on the altar, none could perceive the person from whom the laugh proceeded. It was by this time near two o'clock in the morning.

He now stood for a few moments on the platform, and his chest heaved with a depth of anxiety equal to the difficulty of the design he wished to accomplish.

"Brothers," said he—"for we are all brothers — sworn upon all that's blessed an' holy to obey whatever them that's over us, manin' among ourselves,[1] wishes us to do—are you now ready, in the name of God, upon whose althar I stand, to fulfil yer oaths?"

The words were scarcely uttered, when those who had stood beside the altar during the night sprang from their places, and descending its steps rapidly, turned round, and raising their arms, exclaimed, "By all that's sacred an' holy, we're willin'!"

[1] In opposition to the constituted authorities.

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In the meantime, those who sat upon the steps of the altar instantly rose, and following the example of those who had just spoken, exclaimed after them, "To be sure—by all that's sacred an' holy, we're willin'!"

"Now, boys," said the captain, "aren't yees big fools for your pains? an' one of yees doesn't know what I mane."

"You're our captain," said one of those who had stood at the altar, "an' has yer ordhers from higher quarthers; of coorse, whatever ye command upon us we're bound to obey you in."

"Well," said he, smiling, "I only wanted to thry yees; an' by the oath yees tuck, there's not a captain in the county has as good a right to be proud of his min as I have. Well, yees won't rue it, maybe, when the right time comes; and for that same rason every one of yees must have a glass from the jar—thim that won't dhrink it in the chapel can dhrink it widout; an' here goes to open the door for them."

He then distributed another glass to every man who would accept it, and brought the jar afterwards to the chapel door, to satisfy the scruples of those who would not drink within. When this was performed, and all duly excited, he proceeded—

"Now, brothers, you are solemnly sworn to obey me, and I'm sure there's no thraithur here that ud parjure himself for a thrifle; but I'm sworn to obey them that's above me, manin' still among ourselves; an' to show you that I don't scruple to do it, here goes!"

He then turned round, and taking the Missal between his hands, placed it upon the altar. Hitherto every word was uttered in a low, precautionary tone; but on grasping the book, he again turned round, and looking upon his confederates with the same Satanic expression which marked his countenance before, exclaimed, in a voice of deep determination—

"By this sacred an' holy book of God, I will perform the action which we have met this night to accomplish, be that what it may; an' this I swear upon God's book an' God's althar!"

On concluding he struck the book violently with his open hand.

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At this moment the candle which burned before him went suddenly out, and the chapel was wrapped in pitchy darkness; the sound as if of rushing wings fell upon our ears; and fifty voices dwelt upon the last words of his oath with wild and supernatural tones, that seemed to echo and to mock what he had sworn. There was a pause, and an exclamation of horror from all present; but the captain was too cool and steady to be disconcerted. He immediately groped about until he got the candle, and proceeding calmly to a remote corner of the chapel, took up a half-burned turf which lay there, and after some trouble, succeeded in lighting it again. He then explained what had taken place; which indeed was easily done, as the candle happened to be extinguished by a pigeon which sat directly above it. The chapel, I should have observed, was at this time, like many country chapels, unfinished inside, and the pigeons of a neighbouring dovecote had built nests among the rafters of the unceiled roof; which circumstance also explained the rushing of the wings, for the birds had been affrighted by the sudden loudness of the noise. The mocking voices were nothing but the echoes, rendered naturally more awful by the scene, the mysterious object of the meeting, and the solemn hour of the night.

When the candle was again lighted, and these startling circumstances accounted for, the persons whose vengeance had been deepening more and more during the night rushed to the altar in a body, where each, in a voice trembling with passionate eagerness, repeated the oath; and as every word was pronounced, the same echoes heightened the wildness of the horrible ceremony by their long and unearthly tones. The countenances of these human tigers were livid with suppressed rage; their knit brows, compressed lips, and kindled eyes fell under the dim light of the taper with an expression calculated to sicken any heart not absolutely diabolical.

As soon as this dreadful rite was completed, we were again startled by several loud bursts of laughter, which proceeded from the lower darkness of the chapel; and the captain, on hearing them, turned to the place, and reflecting for a moment, said in Irish, "*Gutsho nish, avohelhee*—Come hither now, boys."

A rush immediately took place from the corner in which

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they had secreted themselves all the night; and seven men appeared, whom we instantly recognised as brothers and cousins of certain persons who had been convicted some time before for breaking into the house of an honest poor man in the neighbourhood, from whom, after having treated him with barbarous violence, they took away such firearms as he kept for his own protection.

It was evidently not the captain's intention to have produced these persons until the oath should have been generally taken; but the exulting mirth with which they enjoyed the success of his scheme betrayed them, and put him to the necessity of bringing them forward somewhat before the concerted moment.

The scene which now took place was beyond all power of description: peals of wild, fiend-like yells rang through the chapel, as the party which stood on the altar, and that which had crouched in the darkness, met; wringing of hands, leaping in triumph, striking of sticks and firearms against the ground and the altar itself, dancing and cracking of fingers, marked the triumph of some hellish determination. Even the captain for a time was unable to restrain their fury; but at length he mounted the platform before the altar once more, and, with a stamp of his foot, recalled their attention to himself and the matter in hand.

"Boys," said he, "enough of this, and too much; an' well for us it is that the chapel is in a lonely place, or our foolish noise might do us no good. Let thim that swore so manfully jist now stand a one side, till the rest kiss the book, one by one."

The proceedings, however, had by this time taken too fearful a shape for even the captain to compel them to a blindfold oath. The first man he called flatly refused to answer until he should hear the nature of the service that was required. This was echoed by the remainder, who, taking courage from the firmness of this person, declared generally that until they first knew the business they were to execute none of them would take the oath. The captain's lip quivered slightly, and his brow again became knit with the same hellish expression which I have remarked gave him so much the appearance of an embodied fiend; but this speedily passed

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away, and was succeeded by a malignant sneer, in which lurked, if there ever did in a sneer, "a laughing devil," calmly, determinedly atrocious.

"It wasn't worth yer whiles to refuse the oath," said he mildly; "for the truth is, I had next to nothing for yees to do. Not a hand, maybe, would have to rise; only jist to look on; an' if any resistance would be made, to show yourselves; yer numbers would soon make them see that resistance would be no use whatever in the present case. At all evints, the oath of secrecy must be taken, or woe be to him that will refuse that; he won't know the day, nor the hour, nor the minute when he'll be made a spatchcock ov."

He then turned round, and placing his right hand on the Missal, swore, "In the presence of God, and before His holy altar, that whatever might take place that night he would keep secret from man or mortal, except the priest, and that neither bribery, nor imprisonment, nor death would wring it from his heart."

Having done this, he again struck the book violently, as if to confirm the energy with which he swore, and then calmly descending the steps, stood with a serene countenance, like a man conscious of having performed a good action. As this oath did not pledge those who refused to take the other to the perpetration of any specific crime, it was readily taken by all present. Preparations were then made to execute what was intended; the half-burned turf was placed in a little pot; another glass of whisky was distributed; and the door being locked by the captain, who kept the key as parish clerk and master, the crowd departed silently from the chapel.

The moment those who lay in the darkness during the night made their appearance at the altar, we knew at once the persons we were to visit; for, as I said before, they were related to the miscreants whom one of those persons had convicted, in consequence of their midnight attack upon himself and his family. The captain's object in keeping them unseen was that those present, not being aware of the duty about to be imposed on them, might have less hesitation about swearing to its fulfilment. Our conjectures were correct, for on leaving the chapel we directed our steps to the house in which this devoted man resided.

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The night was still stormy, but without rain; it was rather dark, too, though not so as to prevent us from seeing the clouds careering swiftly through the air. The dense curtain which had overhung and obscured the horizon was now broken, and large sections of the sky were clear, and thinly studded with stars that looked dim and watery, as did indeed the whole firmament; for in some places black clouds were still visible, threatening a continuance of tempestuous weather. The road appeared washed and gravelly; every dyke was full of yellow water, and every little rivulet and larger stream dashed its hoarse music in our ears; every blast, too, was cold, fierce, and wintry, sometimes driving us back to a standstill, and again, when a turn in the road would bring it in our backs, whirling us along for a few steps with involuntary rapidity. At length the fated dwelling became visible, and a short consultation was held in a sheltered place between the captain and the two parties who seemed so eager for its destruction. The firearms were now loaded, and their bayonets and short pikes, the latter shod and pointed with iron, were also got ready. The live coal which was brought in the small pot had become extinguished; but to remedy this, two or three persons from a remote part of the county entered a cabin on the wayside, and under pretence of lighting their own and their comrades' pipes, procured a coal of fire—for so they called a lighted turf. From the time we left the chapel until this moment a profound silence had been maintained; a circumstance which, when I considered the number of persons present, and the mysterious and dreaded object of their journey, had a most appalling effect upon my spirits.

At length we arrived within fifty perches of the house, walking in a compact body, and with as little noise as possible; but it seemed as if the very elements had conspired to frustrate our design, for on advancing within the shade of the farm-hedge, two or three persons found themselves up to the middle in water, and on stooping to ascertain more accurately the state of the place, we could see nothing but one immense sheet of it, spread like a lake over the meadows which surrounded the spot we wished to reach.

Fatal night! The very recollection of it, when associated

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with the fearful tempests of the elements, grows, if that were possible, yet more wild and revolting. Had we been engaged in any innocent or benevolent enterprise, there was something in our situation just then that had a touch of interest in it to a mind imbued with a relish for the savage beauties of nature. There we stood, about a hundred and thirty in number, our dark forms bent forward, peering into the dusky expanse of water, with its dim gleams of reflected light, broken by the weltering of the mimic waves into ten thousand fragments; whilst the few stars that overhung it in the firmament appeared to shoot through it in broken lines, and to be multiplied fifty-fold in the gloomy mirror on which we gazed.

Over us was a stormy sky, and around us a darkness through which we could only distinguish, in outline, the nearest objects, whilst the wind swept strongly and dismally upon us. When it was discovered that the common pathway to the house was inundated, we were about to abandon our object and return home. The captain, however, stooped down low for a moment, and almost closing his eyes, looked along the surface of the waters, and then raising himself very calmly, said, in his usual quiet tone, "Yees needn't go back, boys; I've found a way; jist follow me."

He immediately took a more circuitous direction, by which we reached a causeway that had been raised for the purpose of giving a free passage to and from the house during such inundations as the present. Along this we had advanced more than half way, when we discovered a breach in it, which, as afterwards appeared, had that night been made by the strength of the flood. This, by means of our sticks and pikes, we found to be about three feet deep and eight yards broad. Again we were at a loss how to proceed, when the fertile brain of the captain devised a method of crossing it.

"Boys," said he, "of coorse you've all played at leap-frog; very well, strip and go in, a dozen of you, lean one upon the back of another from this to the opposite bank, where one must stand facing the outside man, both their shoulders agin one another, that the outside man may be supported. Then we can creep over you, an' a dacent bridge you'll be, anyway."

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This was the work of only a few minutes, and in less than ten we were all safely over.

Merciful Heaven! how I sicken at the recollection of what is to follow! On reaching the dry bank, we proceeded instantly, and in profound silence, to the house. The captain divided us into companies, and then assigned to each division its proper station. The two parties who had been so vindictive all the night he kept about himself; for of those who were present they only were in his confidence, and knew his nefarious purpose—their number was about fifteen. Having made these dispositions, he, at the head of about five of them, approached the house on the windy side, for the fiend possessed a coolness which enabled him to seize upon every possible advantage. That he had combustibles about him was evident, for in less than fifteen minutes nearly one-half of the house was enveloped in flames. On seeing this, the others rushed over to the spot where he and his gang were standing, and remonstrated earnestly, but in vain. The flames now burst forth with renewed violence, and as they flung their strong light upon the faces of the foremost group, I think hell itself could hardly present anything more Satanic than their countenances, now worked up into a paroxysm of infernal triumph at their own revenge. The captain's look had lost all its calmness, every feature started out into distinct malignity; the curve in his brow was deep, and ran up to the root of the hair, dividing his face into two segments, that did not seem to have been designed for each other. His lips were half open, and the corners of his mouth a little brought back on each side, like those of a man expressing intense hatred and triumph over an enemy who is in the death-struggle under his grasp. His eyes blazed from beneath his knit eyebrows with a fire that seemed to be lighted up in the infernal pit itself. It is unnecessary and only painful to describe the rest of his gang. Demons might have been proud of such horrible visages as they exhibited; for they worked under all the power of hatred, revenge, and joy; and these passions blended into one terrible scowl, enough almost to blast any human eye that would venture to look upon it.

When the others attempted to intercede for the lives of

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the inmates, there were at least fifteen guns and pistols levelled at them.

"Another word," said the captain, "an' you're a corpse where you stand, or the first man who will dare to spake for them. No, no, it wasn't to spare them we came here. 'No mercy' is the password for the night, an' by the sacred oath I swore beyant in the chapel, any one among yees that will attempt to show it will find none at my hand. Surround the house, boys, I tell ye, I hear them stirring. 'No quarther—no mercy,' is the ordher of the night."

Such was his command over these misguided creatures, that in an instant there was a ring round the house to prevent the escape of the unhappy inmates, should the raging element give them time to attempt it; for none present durst withdraw themselves from the scene, not only from an apprehension of the captain's present vengeance or that of his gang, but because they knew that, even had they then escaped, an early and certain death awaited them from a quarter against which they had no means of defence. The hour now was about half-past two o'clock. Scarcely had the last words escaped from the captain's lips, when one of the windows of the house was broken, and a human head, having the hair in a blaze, was descried, apparently a woman's, if one might judge by the profusion of burning tresses, and the softness of the tones, notwithstanding that it called, or rather shrieked, aloud for help and mercy. The only reply to this was the whoop from the captain and his gang of "No mercy—no mercy!" and that instant the former and one of the latter rushed to the spot, and ere the action could be perceived, the head was transfixed with a bayonet and a pike, both having entered it together. The word mercy was divided in her mouth; a short silence ensued; the head hung down on the window, but was instantly tossed back into the flames!

This action occasioned a cry of horror from all present, except the gang and their leader, which startled and enraged the latter so much that he ran towards one of them, and had his bayonet, now reeking with the blood of its innocent victim, raised to plunge it in his body, when, dropping the point, he said in a piercing whisper that hissed in the ears of all, "It's no use now, you know; if one's to hang, all will

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hang; so our safest way, you persave, is to lave none of them to tell the story. Ye may go now, if you wish; but it won't save a hair of your heads. You cowardly set! I knew if I had tould yees the sport, that none of yees, except my own boys, would come, so I jist played a thrick upon you; but remimber what you are sworn to, and stand to the oath ye tuck."

Unhappily, notwithstanding the wetness of the preceding weather, the materials of the house were extremely combustible: the whole dwelling was now one body of glowing flame; yet the shouts and shrieks within rose awfully above its crackling, and the voice of the storm, for the wind once more blew in gusts and with great violence. The doors and windows were all torn open, and such of those within as had escaped the flames rushed towards them, for the purpose of further escape, and of claiming mercy at the hands of their destroyers; but whenever they appeared, the unearthly cry of "NO MERCY" rung upon their ears for a moment, and for a moment only, for they were flung back at the points of the weapons which the demons had brought with them to make the work of vengeance more certain.

As yet there were many persons in the house whose cry for life was strong as despair, and who clung to it with all the awakened powers of reason and instinct. The ear of man could hear nothing so strongly calculated to stifle the demon of cruelty and revenge within him as the long and wailing shrieks which rose beyond the elements in tones that were carried off rapidly upon the blast, until they died away in the darkness that lay behind the surrounding hills. Had not the house been in a solitary situation, and the hour the dead of night, any person sleeping within a moderate distance must have heard them, for such a cry of sorrow rising into a yell of despair was almost sufficient to have awakened the dead. It was lost, however, upon the hearts and ears that heard it: to them—though, in justice be it said, to only comparatively a few of them—it was as delightful as the tones of soft and entrancing music.

The claims of the surviving sufferers were now modified: they supplicated merely to suffer death by the weapons of their enemies; they were willing to bear that, provided they should be allowed to escape from the flames; but no—the

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horrors of the conflagration were calmly and malignantly gloried in by their merciless assassins, who deliberately flung them back into all their tortures. In the course of a few minutes a man appeared upon the side-wall of the house, nearly naked; his figure, as he stood against the sky in horrible relief, was so finished a picture of woe-begone agony and supplication that it is yet as distinct in my memory as if I were again present at the scene. Every muscle, now in motion by the powerful agitation of his sufferings, stood out upon his limbs and neck, giving him an appearance of desperate strength, to which by this time he must have been wrought up; the perspiration poured from his frame, and the veins and arteries of his neck were inflated to a surprising thickness. Every moment he looked down into the flames which were rising to where he stood; and as he looked, the indescribable horror which flitted over his features might have worked upon the devil himself to relent. His words were few.

"My child," said he, "is still safe; she is an infant, a young crathur that never harmed you nor any one—she is still safe. Your mothers, your wives, have young innocent childher like it. Oh, spare her!—think for a moment that it's one of your own!—spare it, as you hope to meet a just God; or if you don't, in mercy shoot me first—put an end to me before I see her burned!"

The captain approached him coolly and deliberately. "You'll prosecute no one now, you bloody informer," said he; "you'll convict no more boys for takin' an' ould gun an' pistol from you, or for givin' you a neighbourly knock or two into the bargain."

Just then, from a window opposite him, proceeded the shrieks of a woman, who appeared at it with the infant in her arms. She herself was almost scorched to death; but with the presence of mind and humanity of her sex, she was about to put the little babe out of the window. The captain noticed this, and with characteristic atrocity, thrust, with a sharp bayonet, the little innocent, along with the person who endeavoured to rescue it, into the red flames, where they both perished. This was the work of an instant. Again he approached the man. "Your child is a coal now," said he,

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with deliberate mockery; "I pitched it in myself, on the point of this"—showing the weapon—"an' now is your turn"—saying which he clambered up, by the assistance of his gang, who stood with a front of pikes and bayonets bristling to receive the wretched man, should he attempt, in his despair, to throw himself from the wall. The captain got up, and placing the point of his bayonet against his shoulder, flung him into the fiery element that raged behind him. He uttered one wild and terrific cry as he fell back, and no more. After this, nothing was heard but the crackling of the fire and the rushing of the blast: all that had possessed life within were consumed, amounting either to eleven or fifteen persons.

When this was accomplished, those who took an active part in the murder stood for some time about the conflagration; and as it threw its red light upon their fierce faces and rough persons, soiled as they now were with smoke and black streaks of ashes, the scene seemed to be changed to hell, the murderers to spirits of the damned rejoicing over the arrival and the torture of some guilty soul. The faces of those who kept aloof from the slaughter were blanched to the whiteness of death; some of them fainted, and others were in such agitation that they were compelled to lean on their comrades. They became actually powerless with horror. Yet to such a scene were they brought by the pernicious influence of Ribbonism.

It was only when the last victim went down that the conflagration shot up into the air with most unbounded fury. The house was large, deeply thatched, and well furnished; and the broad red pyramid rose up with fearful magnificence towards the sky. Abstractedly it had sublimity, but now it was associated with nothing in my mind but blood and terror. It was not, however, without a purpose that the captain and his gang stood to contemplate its effect. "Boys," said he, "we had betther be sartin that all's safe; who knows but there might be some of the sarpents crouchin' under a hape o' rubbish, to come out an' gibbet us to-morrow or next day; we had betther wait awhile, anyhow, if it was only to see the blaze."

Just then the flames rose majestically to a surprising

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height. Our eyes followed their direction; and we perceived, for the first time, that the dark clouds above, together with the intermediate air, appeared to reflect back, or rather to have caught, the red hue of the fire. The hills and country about us appeared with an alarming distinctness; but the most picturesque part of it was the effect or reflection of the blaze on the floods that spread over the surrounding plains. These, in fact, appeared to be one broad mass of liquid copper; for the motion of the breaking waters caught from the blaze of the high waving column, as reflected in them, a glaring light, which eddied and rose and fluctuated as if the flood itself had been a lake of molten fire.

Fire, however, destroys rapidly. In a short time the flames sank—became weak and flickering—by-and-by they shot out only in fits—the crackling of the timbers died away—the surrounding darkness deepened—and, ere long, the faint light was overpowered by the thick volumes of smoke that rose from the ruins of the house and its murdered inhabitants.

"Now, boys," said the captain, "all is safe—we may go. Remember, every man of you, what you've sworn this night on the book an' altar of God—not on a heretic Bible. If you perjure yourselves, you may hang us; but let me tell you, for your comfort, that if you do, there is them livin' that will take care the lase of your own lives will be but short."

After this we dispersed every man to his own home.

Reader, not many months elapsed ere I saw the bodies of this captain, whose name was Patrick Devaun, and all those who were actively concerned in the perpetration of this deed of horror, withering in the wind, where they hung gibbeted near the scene of their nefarious villainy; and while I inwardly thanked Heaven for my own narrow and almost undeserved escape, I thought in my heart how seldom, even in this world, justice fails to overtake the murderer, and to enforce the righteous judgment of God—that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

This tale of terror is, unfortunately, too true. The scene of hellish murder detailed in it lies at Wildgoose Lodge in the county of Louth, within about four miles of Carrickmacross, and nine of Dundalk. No such multitudinous murder

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has occurred, under similar circumstances, except the burning of the Sheas in the county of Tipperary. The name of the family burned in Wildgoose Lodge was Lynch. One of them had, shortly before this fatal night, prosecuted and convicted some of the neighbouring Ribbonmen, who visited him with severe marks of their displeasure in consequence of his having refused to enrol himself as a member of their body.

The language of the story is partly fictitious; but the facts are pretty closely such as were developed during the trial of the murderers. Both parties were Roman Catholics. There were, if the author mistake not, either twenty-five or twenty-eight of those who took an active part in the burning hanged and gibbeted in different parts of the county of Louth. Devaun, the ringleader, hung for some months in chains, within about a hundred yards of his own house, and about half a mile from Wildgoose Lodge. His mother could neither go into or out of her cabin without seeing his body swinging from the gibbet. Her usual exclamation on looking at him was, "God be good to the sowl of my poor marthyr!" The peasantry, too, frequently exclaimed, on seeing him, "Poor Paddy!"—a gloomy fact that speaks volumes.

NOTE.—The trial of the prisoners charged with this fearful crime took place in Dundalk at the Spring Assizes of 1818. Their names were Patrick Devaun, Hugh M'Cabe, Pat Waters, James Campbell, Owen Gaynor, Laurence Gaynor, Pat M'Guillan, James Loughran, Thomas M'Cullagh, Edward M'Quillan, Michael Kieran, Michael Floody, Mat Clarke, Pat Craven, Pat Malone, John Kieran, George M'Quillan, Pat Meaghan, James M'Alarney, James Morris, and James Smith. They were defended by the notorious Leonard M'Nally, a very able advocate, who was not then suspected by the people of his proved infamous conduct in betraying his clients among the United Irishmen.—ED.

END OF VOL. III.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh and London

JUN 6 1917

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